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ALTERNATIVE VIEWS OF THE BIBLE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

MODERNISM AND ITS RESTATEMENT OF CHRISTIAN
DOCTRINE: IS IT THE TRUTH OF GOD?

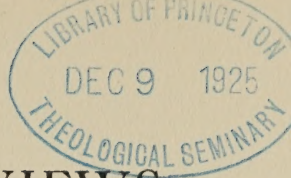
CHRISTIAN UNITY

THE MAN CHRIST JESUS: *A Meditation on His Life
and Death, and a Study of His Abiding Suffi-
ciency*

IS THE CHRISTIAN A WORSHIPER OF GOD OR AN
IDOLATER?

CHRISTIAN COMPANIONSHIP

MAN AND THE FUTURE STATE: *An Abridgment
of "Facts and Theories as to a Future State"
by F. W. Grant.*



ALTERNATIVE VIEWS OF THE BIBLE

BY
JOHN BLOORE

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FOREWORD

The modern use of the Bible ¹ depends for a foundation upon the modern view of the Bible considered in this book.

Louis Wallis in his book entitled *Sociological Study of the Bible* sets forth this modern view of the Scriptures concisely and systematically.² We shall rely upon it chiefly for the material used in the present review and criticism. That this book is thoroughly reliable and scholarly, and a faithful presentation of results according to the Modern Critical School, is amply assured by the standing of the men to whom its contents were submitted for examination and criticism.³ For this side of the question we may then feel quite sure of our ground. We may confidently proceed on the basis of being correctly informed concerning the foundations upon which the modern approach to, and use of, the Bible is erected.

¹ This is ably advocated by Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick in his recent volume *The Modern Use of the Bible* (Macmillan, September, 1924). For an examination of it see ch. v of this present book.

² University of Chicago Press, Fourth impression, 1922.

³ Consult its Prefatory xxxiii.

FOREWORD

Our present interest is in these foundations, rather than in the superstructure. An honest effort has been made to supply by copious quotation and reference as full a presentation of the modern view as would be demanded by an ordinary reader who desired to obtain a good grasp of the subject. If the foundation is found defective, the superstructure is imperiled; if it is destroyed, the building itself must fall.

The conclusions reached in this book will not be acceptable to those committed to modern liberalism. It hopes to be of service, however, to some of those who are disturbed by present controversy, and find it difficult to wend their way through its maze. It especially desires to come to the assistance of the bewildered and discouraged who may be on the verge of abandoning hope, not knowing which way to turn. If to any of these this book proves to be a stepping stone from the shifting sands of uncertainty to the solid ground of assurance concerning the Bible the writer's desire will be fulfilled.

JOHN BLOORE

Plainfield, New Jersey November, 1924.

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ALTERNATIVE VIEWS OF THE BIBLE

CHAPTER I

THE MODERN VIEW OF THE BIBLE

It will not be necessary here to review the various stages marking the course of Biblical scholarship during the past century. It will suffice if we present the highly developed system which is the culmination of those studies. This system was articulated and put into its present widely accepted form by Prof. Wellhausen¹ who is regarded, therefore, as the one who securely laid the foundation for the entire reconstruction of Biblical knowledge. He also greatly helped in building the superstructure.

There has been no material advance since beyond the point reached by him, except in matters of detail. The position, which he took, may perhaps best be described as the documentary-historical-evolutionary viewpoint of Bible literature and history. By this is meant:

¹His epoch-making book, *Geschichte Israels*, appeared in 1878. "In that masterly work the new literary and historical study of the Bible was formulated and extended in such a way as to command the attention and assent of learned specialists; and it produced a revolution." It came as "the climax of a long campaign for scientific study of the Bible."

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(1) That this literature is made up of various early documents in which myth and legend are recorded side by side with actual historical events, and that these earlier documents were afterward combined with later literary productions of the ninth to the fifth or fourth centuries B. C. This is the process by which the Pentateuch, Joshua and the other historical books (Judges to Esther) were compiled. During those same centuries there was added to the Scriptures, the writings of the prophets and the wisdom or experience books;

(2) That since narratives of a supernatural and miraculous nature must be regarded not as history, but simply as myths and legends of the Israelitish tribes, similar in character to those of other peoples such as the Greeks or Romans, therefore this miracle element must be eliminated from the Biblical literature and along with it much of the narratives with which it is interwoven. Accordingly for the real starting point of reliable history, for solid ground upon which historical criticism can stand, we must begin with the picture of the condition of the Hebrew tribes presented in the book of Judges.

This position is taken because, it is declared, no clear evidence of either the knowledge or practice of such an

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economy of religion as is presented in the legislation of the Pentateuch is anywhere discoverable from Joshua's day up to the Josiah period (over six centuries). This also becomes the reason given for assigning the compilation of these history Books to the later epoch mentioned.

The conclusion reached from these premises is that there was a gradual rise of the Hebrews from an idolatrous condition, little better than that of neighboring peoples, to the purity of concept found in the prophetic writings and to the elaboration of ritual and temple service given in the priestly reformation and legislation of the Josiah-Ezra period. The authors of this reformation and legislation must have woven from some very slender threads of fact their whole story of the Tabernacle in the wilderness and the rest, for the sake of throwing round the nation's religious development the sanctity of an ancient age by connecting it with the name of the greatest hero in Israelitish mythology—Moses. From this there results:

(3) The theory that an evolutionary process in the history and religion of Israel explains how the Old Testament literature developed perfectly naturally in the above historical manner.

This evolution, of course, went through various stages.

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Since we can know very little, according to the canons of historical criticism, about the wilderness and Egyptian experiences of the Israelite families—these told only in the legend-laden Pentateuch—we must begin with the Judges period, and pass through the decline and fall of the Judges to the rise of the kingdom period, passing on again to find, however, that the decline and fall of the nation was but the occasion when the religious development reached the climax to which it had been slowly evolving side by side with the progress and decay of the social order. We are assured that “the ruin of ancient Israel was necessary to the birth of the Old Testament.”

This religious history, it is claimed, is the story of an upward climb from polytheism with its many altars and sanctuaries to monotheism with one central sanctuary, an organized priesthood, an established system of sacrifice and service, and a large body of law. Further, that while certain documents were in existence during these centuries, purporting to give the earliest history of the people and even carrying back the record to the creation as well as containing perhaps a limited number of simple laws, the work of compiling, editing, and greatly amplifying them

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was not undertaken until the decline of the kingdom, the ensuing exile and subsequent restoration.

This is stated thus:

The Mosaic Law, instead of being the force that set the peculiar development of Israel in motion, was itself the product of that evolution.

Again,

Religion was in the world many ages before the Hebrew nation was born. Our problem is not, How did *religion* arise? but, How did *Bible* religion arise? When we go behind the scenes, and begin to consider the circumstances amid which, and through which, the Bible religion came into the world, we are thrown back upon a local, definite, concrete situation of great interest. Yahweh ² (*i.e.*, Jehovah) emerges into distinction through a struggle against Baal-worship which was derived from the Amorite side of the nation's ancestry.

² The form accepted for the sacred Name by modern scholars who consider the usual form "Jehovah" to be a hybrid combination of the four consonants which alone compose the sacred Name, and the vowels of the Hebrew word Lord. These vowels were added by the Jews who feared, through superstition, to pronounce the Name in its original form and substituted the word Lord. Thus it comes that in our A. V. with few exceptions Lord is used in the almost seven thousand occurrences of the Name.

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We do not connect him with warfare against Marduk of Babylon, or Amon of Egypt, or any other far-away deity. It is the Baal-idea that serves as the foil against which the Yahweh-idea takes on its distinctive character.

The Bible religion then, took form around the idea of "Yahweh." We shall never know how the worship of Yahweh first became current,³ any more than we can trace the steps by which the Greeks got the worship of Zeus, the Egyptians that of Osiris, or the Babylonians that of Marduk. But there is no evidence that the worship of Yahweh stood at first upon any different footing than did other cults of the ancient world . . . The Bible religion came into existence by the sifting of ancient religious ideas through the peculiar national experience of the Hebrews. This national experience was unlike that of any other ancient people; and it set the Hebrew mind at work in channels different from those opened before their contemporaries. [It] took form gradually through a series of emergencies, or crises, in which the idea of Yahweh passed from stage

³ This is because the Pentateuch must be considered mythical and legendary, and not history, according to the critics.

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to stage. The epochs in this process have left their marks in the Bible as clearly as the various geological periods have left their traces in the strata of the earth.⁴

⁴The foregoing extracts are from *Sociological Study of the Bible* by Louis Wallis (1922 impression), pp. 86, 87, 213. Further quotations will be given from this book, which is without doubt a remarkably cogent presentation of the views here to be considered.

CHAPTER II

PRINCIPAL FEATURES OF MODERNISM

Before summarizing the results of this revolutionary treatment of the Bible and its effect upon our own religious faith it may be well to enlarge a little upon its principal features under the following four heads: (1) The road traveled by criticism; (2) The method used by criticism; (3) The course of Bible history as traced by criticism; (4) The origin and making of the Bible according to the latest explanation of criticism.

Simply a statement of the modernistic view of the Bible is given in the following consideration of these features. The refutation of that view will occupy us in subsequent chapters.

(1) *The road traveled by Criticism.* It is thus described:

The view of the Bible taken by our ancestors a few generations ago differed greatly from the view toward

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which the professional scholarship of the modern world has been moving in the last hundred years or so. During the Middle Ages, and up to the opening of the nineteenth century, it was the universal belief of the Christian church that the Bible was the product of a mechanical sort of inspiration which left little or nothing of essential importance for the human writers of it to do. In the same way, it was believed that the *religion*¹ of the Bible came into the world by a sudden stroke of power, in a purely miraculous and quite supernatural manner. These views were formed at a time when the prevailing ideas about human history, and about the earth on which we live, and about the universe at large, were much different from the ideas that now reign supreme in all well-informed circles. The progress of scientific research has gradually and unobtrusively changed the vast body of belief that characterized the Middle Ages . . . The world in which we live is now revealed as a floating speck in a cosmos that staggers the greatest intellect. The disclosure of this fact is one

¹ This term is to be understood as comprehending the belief of the supernatural, and the practice resulting from its acceptance, embracing life and experience, doctrines and ordinances, duties and ceremonies. It involves, therefore, revelation and related themes.

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of a series of brilliant scientific discoveries in relation to such matters as the geologic formation and age of the world, the vast length and evolutionary character of human history, man's place in nature, and other subjects of equally vital importance.

The rising tide of discovery brought with it a slowly mounting scientific interest in the Bible and its religion. The truth forced itself into the minds of careful investigators that the Bible was *compiled* from other books far more ancient than the Scriptures. It became clear that the books now standing first in the sacred library were among the latest to be composed, while other books, which had hitherto been supposed to be of late composition, were among the earliest written. The old formula, "The Law and the Prophets," was reversed, so as to read "The Prophets and the Law." It was discovered that the prophets were chiefly preachers to their own times; that they were but little concerned with predicting future events; and that it was largely through their efforts that the religion of the Hebrews was purified from its original heathen, or pagan, elements.

[This] new view of the Bible is bound up with a new

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idea of Hebrew history and a new conception of the religious life of Israel. The religious experience of Israel is now seen to have been a rise toward a higher and purer faith, instead of a decline toward a lower one. The new views have largely displaced the older doctrines in all the leading universities and theological seminaries. They are held in various forms by different scholars; but there is a common basic agreement which rapidly grows larger as the fundamental facts are better understood by professional minds.

The interested public, standing outside the academic world, is aware that great changes have taken place and are even now going on; but the real nature of the new scientific view of the Bible, and the evidence upon which that view is based are but little understood by the laity.² The public as yet scarcely realizes the extent to which the evolutionary principle has been applied to the religion of Israel. Professional investigators, who have given the most and closest attention to the Bible, firmly believe that the idea of God by which ancient Israel finally came to be distinguished, is the

² The book quoted (*Soc. Study of the Bible*) evidently intends to do its best to furnish the much needed enlightenment.

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result of a slow process of psychological, or spiritual, development, corresponding in some way to stages in the national history of the Hebrews. . . . As a rule, the modern biblical investigator holds that the religion began on the level of what we commonly call "paganism," or "heathenism." He believes that "Yahweh," the national deity of Israel, was at first regarded as a local god, one of a large number of divinities that populated the mind of the ancient world; that the people's thought about him slowly rose to the height at which we find it in the great prophets and Jesus; and that this religious evolution was a process guided and controlled by the one true God of the universe who was gradually raising men's thoughts upward through the medium of their daily experiences.

We shall now quote another sample of "the belief and faith of a devout scholar," representing "the attitude of by far the large majority of those who have approached the problem of the Bible in a scientific way." It is that of George Adam Smith, M. A., D.D., LL.D., Prof. of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis, Free Church College, Glasgow:

The god of early Israel was a tribal god; and His rela-

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tion to His people is described in the same way as Israel's neighbors describe the relation of their gods to themselves. Israel looked to Jahweh [Yahweh] as the Moabites looked to Chemosh. . . . They prayed to Him to let them see their desire on their enemies, ascribed their victories to His love for them, their defeats to His anger, and they devoted to Him in slaughter their prisoners of war, and the animals they captured from their foes; all exactly as their Moabite neighbors are reported, in very much the same language, to have done to Chemosh, the god of Moab. Moreover, they regarded the power of Jahweh as limited to their own territory, and His worship as invalid beyond it (I Sam. xxvi. 19 [in the Hebrew and Modern Revised Versions]). Though, like all Semites, they felt their duty to one God as the supreme Lord of themselves, they did not deny the reality of other gods.³

This relates, it is said, to the historical, objective aspects of the Hebrew situation; but the same writer's theological view of the subject is:

Behind that national deity of Israel, and through the

³ From *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Test.*, pp. 128, 129.

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obscure and vain imaginations the early nations had of him, there was the Character and Will of God Himself, using the people's low thoughts and symbols to express Himself to them, lifting them always a little higher, and finally making Himself known as He did through the prophets as the God of the whole earth, identical with righteousness and abounding in mercy.⁴

While there are considerations which lend apparent support to this reading of Israel's history, the preponderance of the evidence is in favor of regarding that history as a story of *decline* instead of origin. After they touched bottom, a gradual lifting of the people free from idolatrous practices and associations did occur which culminated in the great prophets and was finally completed through the purging process of the exile. Upon their return from it, and in fact ever since, no form of polytheism or idolatry has prevailed among the Hebrews. But from the altitude of pure religion thus reached in their history, they entered upon a second *decline* which had reached the low ebb of Pharisaism and worldliness in the days of John the Baptist, and culminated in the Crucifixion of Jesus and the final Dispersion of the Jewish people. There accompanied

⁴ From *Biblical World* (Aug., '96), pp. 100-101.

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this closing phase of their history in Palestine the development of the new and revivifying ministry of Christianity which began, indeed, with a remnant of this very people who had so greatly departed through successive stages of decline from the faith committed to them.

There is one simple but unvarying process in constant evidence, three-fold in character, in Biblical history, consisting of: (1) perfection at the point of origin; (2) decline or decay in the after history thus set in motion; and (3) restoration to another, better, and higher plane in the final issue of the process. Within the scope of this great development, as it affects the universe, or the nations, or Israel in particular, or the Church, or individuals, doubtless many minor instances occur of the operation of what might almost be termed this *law of history*.

The modern scholar then goes on to explain that while he:

does not identify "Yahweh" with the true God, he believes that the true God was using the *idea* of Yahweh in such a way as to cause that idea more and more to take the character of a worthy symbol of religion. This theological position, as a matter of fact, puts far less strain on the modern intellect than does the older ortho-

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doxy, and makes it possible for men to remain within the church who would otherwise be outside of it. The reverent scholar believes that God uses the history of Israel, and the history of the world, for an ineffable, divine purpose which works out slowly across the ages. . . . We take for granted that Bible students "must acquire the art of historical construction by which . . . they may . . . reproduce the history of Israel's religious experience, from those early days when Jehovah [Yahweh] was a tribal God who went out to battle against the gods of other desert tribes."

Now, why the true God should have chosen this particular "idea," why He should have selected and used as His symbol this Yahweh of Israel in preference to the god Chemosh of Moab, or, for that matter, any other national god, is an enigma to modern scholarship. Even Wellhausen confesses he cannot explain it. Nor have these scholars explained how Israel came to have this Yahweh, and there seems very little hope that they will ever know. The case is stated thus:

The Bible declares that Israel and Yahweh became connected by a *covenant*, which was made at a specified moment of time and in a particular place. In the words

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of Hosea: "I am Yahweh thy god *from the land of Egypt*" (Hos. xii. 9). In thorough accord with this, we are told by the book of Exodus that Israel and Yahweh entered into a solemn covenant at Mount Horeb-Sinai, just after the Exodus from Egyptian territory. . . "I will take you to me for a people; and I will be to you a god" (Ex. vi. 7). "And thou, Yahweh, *became* their god" (2 Sam. vii. 24). Now, the question here is, How came the religion of Israel to have this covenant character? . . . It is to this that Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophetic writers refer, either expressly or by implication. The covenant of the prophets [is that] of Sinai, in which Yahweh became the god of Israel. If Yahweh thus became the god of Israel at a certain time and place, it follows, according to the logic of primitive religion, that he must have been connected with some other people before the Israelites entered into relation with him. The Old Testament says that the covenant was made in the Arabian wilderness, prior to the invasion of Canaan. Whatever this transaction was, it lies on the borderland between Israel's prehistoric, nomadic age in the desert and the historic period after the settlement; and there is diffi-

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culty in reconstructing its details upon the basis of the evidence at our disposal.

The material referring to this period is of too uncertain a character for us to form a definite idea of the situation; and the history of the Israelites in the Arabian desert must remain shrouded in darkness. We have seen that the Hexateuchal [Hexateuch is the critical name given to the Pentateuch with Joshua added, which are considered as forming one body of literature distinct from the remainder of the Old Testament] view of the Israelite invasion and settlement of Canaan has much lower historical value than the corresponding narratives in Judges and Samuel; and this consideration, along with many others, leads us to use the Hexateuch with extreme caution at all points. The outstanding impression left upon us, after going over the evidence, is that the cult of Yahweh became current among the Israelites through their contact with a pastoral clan whose wandering ground was in the Sinai peninsula. But Old Testament scholarship is coming to agreement that we cannot envisage the nomadic history of Israel in any clear light.

The conclusion reached is that Yahweh came to the

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Israelites through a covenant with another clan, probably the Kenites, and that "it is becoming evident that the historic fact in the Hexateuch is the importation of a desert god and a nomadic morality into the midst of settled Amorite civilization" when, of course, Israel entered Canaan. Further:

The work of Moses was rather that of introducing or emphasizing the cult of Yahweh than of expounding a new system of ethics; and whatever he may have done, the vital conditions of Hebrew religious development are to be sought in Canaan, and not in the desert. For this process, our chief authorities are the books of the Judges, Samuel, Kings, and the various prophets; while the Hexateuch has only a secondary value.⁵

This, then, is criticism's remarkable answer to the question of the origin of the religion of Israel. It relegates the matter to some kindness of an obscure desert tribe (the *Kenites*) to Israel who adopted its god, but how Yahweh happened to be the deity of that tribe remains a mystery upon which not one ray of light has yet fallen, for all that scientific investigation has progressed so marvelously. Since the Hexateuchal account of origins

⁵ *Soc. Study of the Bible*, pp. 80-82.

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must be rejected because it is pervaded by supernatural and miraculous elements, and since only explanations by natural processes are acceptable to the critical mind, there does not seem to be any other tribe than the Kenites to select as a source, for the other peoples with whom Israel came in contact had gods whose names are known. The Kenite deity, not being directly known, or mentioned, must have been this Yahweh of Israel. He never would have been known to us but for the generous act of Moses in adopting and proclaiming this insignificant deity instead of originating some new god.

But while this is an account of the road over which biblical investigators have thus traveled, we are advised to remember "that they have not yet reached their destination. This reminder is given by the leading exponents of modern biblical research and interpretation. . . . The 'partial and imperfect dawn of a new era of interpretation'" is stated to be the general attitude "of all candid biblical investigators whose method and standpoint are those of the prevailing school of scientific research. We have compared the modern school to travelers who have not reached their destination; but another figure may also be employed. The scientific view of the Bible is like

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a house in process of construction. Most opponents of the evolutionary view of Israel's religion make the tactical mistake of assuming that the house is completed; and they criticize it on the basis of that assumption." ⁶

Our criticism will not be of the superstructure. That it is incomplete we make no question. Our criticism will be of the *foundation* upon which this as yet unfinished house is being erected. It would be a long and tedious process to demolish piecemeal the extensive shell of a building already constructed by the critics. This can be left to totter and fall of itself when once the foundation is destroyed. The foundation in this case is the evolutionary view of Israel's national history which in turn is taken to explain the development of its religion, and the growth of Bible literature.

Having marked out the road over which modern Biblical criticism is traveling, let its method of procedure now be stated.

(2) *The method used by Criticism.*

Modern scientific investigation of the Bible, after all, is only a special application of methods already employed in examining the literature and history of

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. x-xvii.

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the world's great nations. Scientific biblical research, therefore, is not a thing in a corner. It is answerable to the progress of method in the study of all human history. The 'historical method' took its rise among the ancient Greeks, who were the first to achieve emancipation from the reign of mythology.

The Greeks had a literature, once considered as credible history, which described the early age of heroes, recounted divine interventions and communications between gods and men, and told of various miracles. This store of legend and myth formed a sort of Bible to them. It exercised a very great influence upon both their religious and literary life. But the time came when their historians sought to disengage fact from fiction in this mass of mythic story and poem. Thus they established the critical method which has been "taken up by modern historical scholars."

The same is true of ancient Roman history. The Roman people, like the Greeks, made their mythology a matter of literal and serious belief for many centuries. Though the Greeks made an effort to disengage their own history from "its mythic envelope," only in modern times and within the last few generations has Roman history been

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carefully investigated and rewritten. In this work Niebuhr was a foremost leader, reconstructing Roman history according to the new method of historical criticism, in the application of which he was a pioneer and pathfinder.

Now, "the earliest way of treating history [consisted] in accepting uncritically all traditions that come down from the past, and weaving these traditions together into a connected narrative. The mythological part of tradition may relate to 'the gods,' or it may turn around actual historical characters . . . [so] whoever would really *know* human history . . . must reckon with the important fact of mythology. It was the perception of this principle with more or less vividness that led the ancient Greek historians to lay the foundations of the critical, historical method. The realization of the same truth in a fuller degree has been a factor of high importance in the modern progress of historical science. Thus, opposition to the historical method necessarily carries one back toward mythology. . . . The scientific historian, first of all, seeks to ascertain 'facts,' not interpret them, but simply "lay bare what may be called 'the raw material of history.' This fundamental inquiry is dealt with by analyzing the evidence that bears upon the situation. . . . The primary

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work of the scientific investigator of history, then, is to draw the distinction between myths and fact. On the one side, he accumulates a mass of real or supposed myths; and on the other, he gathers a mass of real or supposed facts. The myths are not cast into the limbo of mere curiosities. They are held aside for later study and interpretation. As a rule, they are not mere idle tales; and they teach positive lessons about history even when they are not accepted as literally true."

"After facts [real or supposed] have been separated from their mythic envelope, the demands upon the historian become different. There now emerges the leading question, What are the *connections* between the facts? How are the facts related to each other? How is history to be controlled and interpreted? In other words, after the historian has taken his material apart (analysis), he is called upon to put it together (synthesis)."

Now in the development of scientific writing of history there have sprung up a number of different departments each of which has its specialists; but it must be recognized that the work of each (whether political, religious, moral, domestic, economic, or legal, etc.) is not independent; instead, it stands related to the whole science of history,

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which, in fact, is "the biography of human society" and "must be treated as an 'organic whole.'" With this must be combined the science of sociology which treats of the origin and development of what history records. It "approaches history from the standpoint of the 'social group,'" that is, it considered history as relating "to the evolution of organized groups or communities" which people form. These may be of only local interest, as in the case of the Greeks, whose social mechanism consisted of independent clans reaching back to the nomadic period and whose development worked out in the construction of small "city states" such as Athens and Sparta, but never achieved any real national unity; or they may assume the importance of development in a national form as with the Romans and the Hebrews.

The idea, then, is that group-development is the only basis for the interpretation of history, and that as to all phases of life. This principle is applied to the particular religious interest which centers in the Bible, and leads to the explanation of its origin, development, and interpretation from the evolution of the social group known as the Hebrew nation.⁷ This, then, explains the method pursued

⁷ Extracts from *Sociological Study of the Bible*, pp. xviii-xxiii, pp. 14, 15.

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by the historical criticism of the Bible. The entire explanation of its religion and literature is made to turn upon the answer to the question, How did the social group known as the Hebrew nation originate and develop? "This method of approach to the Bible is a logical application of modern results in historical and social science; and it opens before us the chapters of an intensely absorbing story." This may now be briefly sketched.

(3) *The course of Bible history as defined by Criticism.* This deals not simply with secular aspects, but with the religious elements which so manifestly dominate its course, and constitute the preëminent theme of the Bible. The course, then, of Bible history is *now* outlined and interpreted by scientific historians in the following manner:

The older view of the Bible and its religion did not suppose that the history of the Hebrew people had anything to do with shaping, or 'causing,' the religious ideas peculiar to Israel; and the thought of such a connection is even yet a novelty to most Bible readers. But it should be observed at once that the old view of the nature and origin of the Hebrew religion is bound up with a view of Hebrew *history* which has been discredited in all the foremost institutions of learning. According

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to the old view, the nation called 'Israel' consisted of the descendants of a single race, or family. It was organized at a single stroke, in the wilderness of Arabia. Taking the form of a mighty army, under the generalship of a single commander, the militant nation attacked the land of Canaan, drove out the 'Amorites,' and then divided the entire land by lot among the different clans or tribes which constituted the invading army. This view is based on the first six books of the Old Testament known as the Hexateuch." . . . This view, sociologically, means "that the group-organization of the Hebrews was determined and fixed by law at the very beginning of the national history, and was not the result of development."⁸

"But modern historical investigation has demonstrated that the Hexateuch in its present form is a very late product of Hebrew life;⁹ that it was unknown to the Hebrews throughout the larger part of their time of residence in Palestine;¹⁰ and that the conception of the

⁸ This explains why Hebrew history is "unlike that of any other ancient people," rather than the sociological reason given later.

⁹ This will be enlarged upon shortly in treating of how the Bible was made, according to Criticism. See also note ¹³ below.

¹⁰ This is taken for granted because the history of the nation is

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national history just cited is impossible.”¹¹ Further, the books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings must be accounted “*older* than the Hexateuch;” and “the story which they tell about the origin¹² of the Hebrew nation [which] departs conspicuously from that of the narratives embodied in the first six books of the Old Testament”¹³ considered a sharp contradiction of what might be expected if the Pentateuch was in existence, and had been accepted as the Law of God in the manner recounted in its narratives. A very different and quite reasonable explanation of this history will be given later.

¹¹ Simply because it involves the acceptance of the supernatural and miraculous, and therefore bears the same character as the myths which belong to Greece, Rome, and other nations.

¹² But the question is, Do they tell of *origin* or *decline*? This critical displacement of the Pentateuch and Joshua, in favor of making an historic beginning with Judges leaves several problems demanding solution, in default of which, after a century of critical investigation, we have only the *vague speculations* of the Critics, like the “Kenite hypothesis” of original source referred to above. (See Hastings’ *Dict. of the Bible*, Ext. vol, pp. 626, 627.) Are not the Critics making their own mythology?

¹³ This is stated because the history of the Judges-Kings period does not show the people living up to the Pentateuchal covenant relation, or observing its accompanying legislation, or following its ritual and central sanctuary plan. Instead, the people had many altars, many sanctuaries, and others than members of the priestly house offered sacrifice. From this situation, it is concluded that the Hexateuch could not have been in existence at the time. Further, that we do not find the history in measurable agreement with the legislation of the Pentateuch, until a short period before the exile,

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must be used as the historical starting point. "According to these older documents [Judges-Kings], the land of Canaan was invaded, not by a 'nation' organized as a grand army under one general, but by a number of independent clans which had no common organization. These clans coming in from the desert, merely succeeded in planting themselves here and there in the highlands of Judah, Ephraim, and Gilead. They did not drive out or annihilate the Amorites; but the previous inhabitants remained in possession of a long list of walled cities, most of which were in the lowlands. *The Hebrew nation, as known to history, arose at the point of coalescence between the incoming Israelite clans and the Amorite city-states*

and only in final form after it. Therefore, it must have been compiled during this late period as an instrument for use in accomplishing religious reformation and establishing definite institutions of priestly place and service with one central and only valid sanctuary. In the compiling, this body of law and literature was combined with the mythology found in current documents of early tradition and the few general laws also embodied in them so that the whole collection might be hallowed by the sanctity and supernatural character attached to the ancient mythic age of heroes, so sacred and dear to any ancient people. This does not mean to deny that Abram, Moses, and others were not historic personages, but the mere admission of their having lived becomes about the only needle of fact in this haystack of fiction.

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already established in Canaan. The Amorite cities remained for a long time independent (throughout the period of the Judges and reign of King Saul); but under the House of David, the earlier inhabitants became assimilated with the Israelite monarchy, and lost their racial identity. During the long period between the original invasion and the great Babylonian captivity, the Hebrew people and their kings did not observe the law of the national constitution recorded in the Hexateuch;¹⁴ and this law was finally brought forward in its completed form, and adopted after the Captivity, by the 'Jews,' a remnant of the old Hebrew people. This general view . . . is a commonplace to the scholar who is in possession of the results of scientific investigation of the Bible."

Now the historico-sociological viewpoint and interpretation is that consequent upon this invasion by a nomadic people and their contact with the settled, city-dwelling and so-called civilized peoples inhabiting Canaan, "a great struggle arose between the standpoints of" these groups finally resulting through fusion "in the development of the Hebrew nation."

But the conflict of different social and religious ideas

¹⁴ According to the Critics, it was not yet in existence.

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continued, and "in the long run, the two sides of the struggle came to be symbolized by the terms 'Yahweh' and 'Baal,' which indicate the gods of the races that combined in the national group. By one and the same process, the national deity Yahweh became identified with warfare against 'other gods' and warfare against 'injustice.'" The conflict between the local Baal worship, derived from the Amorites, and that of Yahweh, the national deity, along with which was associated a different social mechanism, resulted in bringing forward the great prophets who, like reformers of their day, preached against polytheism and various forms of social abuses and injustice, connected in their minds with the Baal-system of Amorite origin, so that the movement thus commenced and carried into post-exilic times accomplished the purification of the Hebrew religion, giving to it its final, spiritual, universal, and exalted form which the prophetic books chiefly set forth in a way "that has pierced through the ages and illuminated the history of the world."

This unique development is considered to be due to the religious element which persistently characterized the conflict of different social standpoints engendered by nomadic Israel's invasion of settled and civilized Canaan.

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It is true that similar invasions by primitive peoples had taken place in Babylonia and Egypt, but no similar conflict had ensued, for these conquering nomads had found an already established national unity, social and religious, to which they had to accommodate themselves.

But in Canaan nothing like this was found by Israel; instead of unity in government and religion there were independent city-states or provincial bodies, each worshipping its own god, or Baal. In the conflict of Canaan's different social standpoint with that of nomadic Israel, Hebrew development took place, producing in its course national unity and organization with Yahweh, who at first was only the tribal god of the invaders, now become a national deity.

Thus social and religious elements were combined on both sides of the struggle, and out of its throes, after a duration of centuries, there emerged the result described above. This struggle has been staged nowhere else. It has been acted out only in Hebrew history. Because of this distinctive and peculiar combination of elements, social and religious, the Hebrew-group evolution is considered to be "unlike that of any other ancient people."

It may be necessary for the sake of clearness further to

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define what is meant by this conflict of differing social and religious elements. The ideas and usages of all migratory, unsettled races, such as Israel was at first, are of a different form from those of settled civilized peoples such as the Amorites. With the former, social consciousness put brotherhood foremost—the good treatment of the individual members of clan or tribe—and manhood was held at par value. With the latter, manhood was held at a discount; the common man was looked upon with scant respect. Most of the inhabitants in settled Oriental countries were in the toils of some kind of slavery, while a small, upper class used all the machinery of government and religion to tighten their grip upon the masses still more firmly. Abuse of individual right, and much injustice prevailed with a small privileged class always in the ascendant.

The reverse is true of the nomadic social and economic standpoint, for it maintained a much higher standard of individual right and a more impartial administration of justice. The religious element of the Amorite civilization reflected its social viewpoint. In it the leading men of the upper social class were called “baals” and their gods were “Baals” to whom the people conceded the same

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thought, place, and action as that which they attributed to their own human lords or owners.

Nomadic Israel, on the contrary, had one tribal god. He was interjected abruptly among the Amorite Baals on Israel's invasion of Canaan along with the social customs and laws of nomads, and so was precipitated the conflict of different religious and social elements. This resulted in generating "a new 'variety' of religion. The contact with the cult of civilization produced a 'cross-fertilization of culture' which led to the birth of a unique religion. A new body of spiritual thought was born which avoided the religious evils of civilization and nomadism, and combined their virtues."¹⁵

According to Criticism, this is a description of the course of Hebrew history along with the explanation of the birth and development of Bible religion.

4. *The origin and making of the Bible as now explained by Criticism.* From the preceding sections the reader will already have gleaned something of what may be expected under this heading.

As to the *origin* of the Bible religion, we are told that

¹⁵ Quotations and extracts from *Sociological Study of the Bible*, pp. xxiv-xxx, 95, 135-137, 176.

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this must be sought in the conflict of diverse forces as just described. It is "not the outcome of one special thread of influence, but the product of many tendencies and circumstances working together." This process has been briefly described in the outline of the course of Hebrew history, as now defined by Criticism. It began with the shock occasioned by the meeting of the opposing stand-points represented by nomadism and civilization, complicated by a keen religious competition between the multitudinous Baal-worship of the Amorite civilization and the Yahweh-worship, observed in common by all the tribes of Israel, which they brought out with them from the wilderness.

The contact of these alien social-religious groups produced the conditions of the Judges-period. During it there was a constant alternation of victory and defeat for the invading nomads, who assimilated in the process certain forms of the Baal-worship while still giving their own Yahweh first place. The conflict continued even during Saul's reign, but a fusion of these elements took place under David's conquest, and this new national development naturally gave the god of the conquering Israelites a great new prestige which was celebrated in the building

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of his great temple by Solomon. Nevertheless the Amorite-Baal influences remained in the midst of the Hebrew nation.

Toward the close of Solomon's reign and after the disruption, these influences burst again into prominence, especially acquiring prominence in the northern kingdom. The result was really the vogue of a kind of pantheon of gods, with Yahweh as the chief divinity. A system of polytheism prevailed, and in the new conflict with this, the conflict of opposing social law and custom, which had been much suppressed during the reign of David and Solomon again came to the forefront. In Ahab's reign, this condition reached a crisis when Elijah with unexampled boldness attacked Baal-worship and social injustice,¹⁶ and demanded that the supremacy of Yahweh be fully recognized.

This reformation did not prove permanent, however, the old conditions returned and even grew worse as they

¹⁶ Against all this Samuel had warned when a king was first demanded. In short a throne meant the injection of Amorite influences and conditions into Israel's nomadic social structure. History shows this developed, and became the root of the disruption in Rehoboam's day. This leaven of the things of Baal continued to work and spread. A weak voice now and again was raised against it, but Elijah's thunder brought revolution

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had a habit of doing in the ancient imperialistic form of civilization.

But ancestral influences kept the tradition of the nomadic social forms of law and custom, with their greater measure of practical righteousness, justice, and brotherhood, alive among the common people of the kingdoms, oppressed though they were, and impoverished by despotic methods and exactions to satisfy the extravagant luxury of the Court and of the small upper social class who also reveled in Baal-worship. Yahweh, on the other hand, was always identified with the ancestral social standpoint by both the oppressor and the oppressed. There was a constant alternation of supremacy between the conflicting standpoints: now Amorite-Baalistic influences dominated, then the ancestral Israelite influences rose to the top. This antithesis receives recurring and increasing emphasis in the history of the Kings.

What thus long smouldered, or expressed itself in convulsive effort, as in the case of Elijah, broke out into a great flame of protest, expostulation, and sound teaching with the rise of the literary or writing prophets, beginning with Amos and Hosea. The work thus begun, was followed up and developed by successive prophets, and it

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crystallized religious thought, emphasized righteousness, individual and national, justice and brotherhood. The original idea of Yahweh expanded. From the one god of a group of tribes he grew to be a universal Deity, and the figure of the one true God emerged out of this age-long struggle in Canaan. As already told, He was at work all the time behind the scenes in this drama. By means of the tribal, and later the national deity of Israel, God was preparing the way, finally to reveal Himself fully as "the God of the whole earth, identical with righteousness and abounding in mercy." ¹⁷

All this means that the books of the prophets must be taken as the great foundation strata of Bible religion and literature. The Hexateuch did not exist, nor Judges through Kings at the commencement of the period of the literary prophets, only separate documents, containing some early traditions, a few simple, primary laws and some records of history were in existence, in a scattered form, for they were not combined until later into a body of literature. The movement to collect and compile them took rise during the era of the prophets, whose work gave stimulus to it. Their success in stressing and expanding

¹⁷ See pp. 21, 22.

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the idea of Yahweh gave substance to the idea of instituting a one only valid and central sanctuary with an authorized priesthood and ritual. Thus Deuteronomy¹⁸ was written just before Josiah's reign, hidden in the temple, and suddenly "discovered" to be used as its compiler originally intended, as the lever to inaugurate a religious reformation conforming to the standpoint of the prophets. Deuteronomy thus set in motion a great literary development, extending through several centuries during which the scattered documents and records which gave Israel's original mythology, traditions and history, were collected, sifted, edited and pieced together, sometimes very skillfully, again rather loosely, in the books that we name the Pentateuch, Joshua, and Judges through Kings.

This whole literary development, although the work of many hands and minds is characterized by the general purpose of selecting such things as would be useful in strengthening and embellishing the framework constructed by the Prophetic-Deuteronomic-Priestly schools which began to be formed in the days of the first literary prophets—Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah.¹⁹

¹⁸ At least, most of what now constitutes that book.

¹⁹ "The book of Genesis, being written at a late epoch, reflects the

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Everything thus was ordered to contribute to the advancement of the central idea—the absolute supremacy, unique glory and perfect righteousness of Yahweh as against all the Baals and the social customs connected with them. In the recognition that allegiance to Yahweh was the paramount issue, lay the key to all blessing, individual, national, universal. The adversities and disasters of the national history, culminating in the captivities, were also made to serve this cause. These were selected for special emphasis by Jeremiah. During the exile and after, this great religious movement continued, gaining rather than slowing up under exilic conditions, so that in the Ezra-Nehemiah period it reached its final form, particularly as to laws and ritual. In brief, this was the process of the establishment of monotheism as true religion in contrast with polytheism.

Concurrently, a world-wide perspective developed, in which the Yahweh of tribal Israel who had previously struggle of the prophets against the practices and ideas of their times.” Such instances as that nomadic Abraham is the friend of Yahweh, and the Amorites pronounced wicked; that Abel the nomadic shepherd is acceptable to Yahweh, and Cain the settled worker of the soil is rejected, that Yahweh is presented as opposed to city-building and city-dwelling are some of the things presented as proof!

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become the national god of the Hebrew nation, became the Redeemer of Mankind, the one only true and living God. This is the grand climax to the social-religious conflict staged in the land of Canaan, carried on between the opposing standpoints of invading Israel and the indigenous Amorites.

Thus the great pivot upon which the making of Scripture turns—the center from which it evolves like an ascending and expanding spiral of religious thought of ever increasing spirituality and breadth of vision—is *condemnation of the Hebrews for adopting Amorite law and morals instead of remaining true to the ancestral tribal god, Yahweh, and the code of ethics associated with him by reason of their nomadic origin.*

This completes our brief general sketch of the origin and making of the Bible and its religion as now understood and taught by the critics.

Additional details may help to elucidate their scheme further and prove not uninteresting in themselves. Generally speaking, the critics look at the books beginning with Genesis and on through Kings as composed of various documents which were brought together and gradually added to by a school of writers during the seventh to the

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fifth centuries B.C. Only toward the end of this period did this body of literature receive its present form practically. The labors of these critics have been devoted to distinguishing, analyzing, and separating these documents into their originals, which they claim to be able to do by reason of certain literary forms, phrases, special words and distinctive lines of thought or special viewpoints peculiar to each of them. They believe that each of these originals can be chronologically located by sifting out parallelisms between these features peculiar to it and the actual history of the Hebrew people.

Chronologically speaking these documents and the compositions added to them are then placed in the following order:

1. Two sets of narratives, called *Elohistic* and *Yahweh-istic* because they make use in large measure of the names "Elohim" and "Yahweh" [Jehovah], respectively are separated out in which it is claimed that there exist marked divergences and contradictions in their treatment of the same events. The editors distributed these double accounts throughout our Hexateuch, in some cases dovetailing passages to each together in such fashion that the critics have found it necessary in certain places actually

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to split verses, assigning part to one source and part to another. Both these sets of duplicated narrative began with the myths of creation as found in Genesis and carried the story into the Judges period. These narratives did not supply any of the material embraced in what we know as Leviticus and Deuteronomy, nor parts of Numbers, and parts of the Tabernacle and Law sections of Exodus. Leviticus and Deuteronomy and these parts of Numbers and Exodus were produced at a much later date.

2. There were certain other books of record, probably contemporaneous to some extent with the above mentioned documents.²⁰

3. The book found in the temple by Hilkiah in Josiah's reign. This is supposed to have comprised most of the present book of Deuteronomy.

For about one hundred years previous to its discovery several of the prophets—Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah—had been delivering their messages. This prepared the way for the production of the "Hilkiah book." "The majority of the critics believe this book of the law to have

²⁰ See Num. xxi. 14, 15;; Josh. x. 12, 13; 2 Sam. i. 18-27; I Kings xiv. 19, 29.

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been the result of a pious fraud promulgated by Hilkiah and Shaphan with the intention of deceiving Josiah into the belief that the reforms which they desired were the express command of God revealed to Moses.”²¹

It is then supposed that this book Hilkiah found was used as a nucleus by a school of writers, now called Deuteronomistic. In conjunction with the prophets who arose after its discovery, Jeremiah in particular, they expanded it into our present Deuteronomy. This is considered demonstrated by the fact that Baal-worship derived from the Amorites is constantly referred to in it.²² “The worship of the Baals is equated, or identified, with everything that the prophets abhor.”

To this same school of writers, for their labors extended over many years, is attributed the final compilation of the present books of Judges, Samuel and Kings. They took the old records and stories of past history (Elohistic, Yahwehistic, etc.) which were available, and added to them the special emphasis which is laid by them in their present form upon the evils of Amorite Baal-worship, customs and morals. This is the process by which these

²¹ Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*, “Hexateuch,” p. 368.

²² vii. 1-5; xii. 2-4; xii. 30; xx. 16-18; xxxi. 16.

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books become such a strong witness to the use of anti-Baal propaganda to enforce the cult of Yahweh.

This led the way to a combination of the Elohist and Yahwehist documents, and the various laws and ceremonies, after their codification, which were found needful in developing the religious reformation set in motion by the famous "Hilkiah book." The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, as soon as it occurred, made the writing down of these priestly practices still more essential and it was taken in hand during the exile. Ezekiel is credited with the first step in this direction, and the result was his ideal plan and constitution for the service of the temple when restored. He was a priest, and other priests followed in his steps. Thus all the older practices and related laws were written down, as well as, doubtless, additions made during a period which reached into post-exilic days; the final result being what critics call the Priestly Code. Leviticus is entirely made up of this material, and other parts of it are found distributed throughout the Hexateuch.

To recapitulate: The order that we have now reached is: the Elohist document, the Yahweh document, certain books of record, the Hilkiah book, then Deuteronomy and the Judges-Kings series, the writings of the prophets

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before and during the exile, and the production of the Priestly Code bringing us to post-exilic time.

Now the next step was the combination of E (Elohistic), Y (Yahwehistic), D (Deutoronomistic), and P (Priestly), probably in the Ezra-Nehemiah period, thus finally producing the Hexateuch (Genesis-Joshua) as we now possess it.

Ezra and Nehemiah, 1 and 2 Chronicles, were put into finished form during the fourth century B.C.

Daniel is placed in the second century B.C.

As to the other books, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, etc., little is known concerning them, except that they were in all probability incorporated in the body of accepted sacred literature during the post-exilic period.

The problem of the composition of the Hexateuch is aptly described by one of the critics, who makes the principle underlying it applicable to all Scripture. He says:

Let us suppose a problem of this kind: Given a patch work quilt, explain the character of the original piece out of which the bits of stuff composing the quilt were cut. First, we notice that, however well the colors may blend, however nice and complete the whole may look,

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many of the adjoining pieces do not actually agree in material, texture, pattern, color, or the like. Ergo, they have been made up out of very different pieces of stuff. So far, we have only proved what may turn out to be . . . a conglomeration of fragments. But suppose that we further discover that many of the bits, though now separated, are like one another in material, texture, etc., we may conjecture that these may have been cut out of one piece. But we shall prove this beyond reasonable doubt if we find that several bits when unpieced fit together, so that the pattern of one is continued in the other; and, moreover, if all of like character are sorted out they form, say, four groups, each of which was evidently once a single piece of stuff, though parts of each are found missing, because, no doubt, they have not been required to make the whole. But we make the analogy with the Hexateuch even closer, if we further suppose that in certain parts of the quilt the bits belonging to, say, two of these groups are so combined as to form a subsidiary pattern within the larger pattern of the whole quilt, and had evidently been sewn together before being connected with the other parts of the quilt; and we may make it even closer

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still, if we suppose that, besides the more important bits of stuff, smaller embellishments, borderings, and the like had been added so as to improve the general effect of the whole.”²³

²³ Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*, “Hexateuch,” p. 365.

CHAPTER III

EFFECTS OF MODERNISM

The effects upon our own faith of the results reached by the critics and just described at some length may be now considered.

This view of the Bible produces the following effects: (1) It asks us to ignore the Bible's distinctive character and manifest difference, and make the history of Greece and Rome our standard in the study and interpretation of Bible history. (2) It asks us to admit that most of the Pentateuch and Joshua is of no higher order than the mythological literature of the Greeks and Romans—a little fact emmeshed in much fiction, of which the Homeric epics and such stories as that of the two sons of Mars, the war-god, named Romulus and Remus, both born of a virgin, are notable examples. (An impartial comparative study certainly shows the fallacy of this method.) (3) Since so “many of the narratives in the earliest history of Rome betray their fabulous nature by the contradictions and impossibilities they involve” (Niebuhr), and giving

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them credence can only result in "the prostration of the understanding and judgment" (*idem*), it asks us to look upon the Pentateuchal early history of Israel in the same way, giving no more credence to its narratives of the supernatural and miraculous. This puts a veto on the use of the Pentateuch, as the *terminus a quo* for the study of the Hebrew social group and its development. For that, we must go to Judges, for the conditions prevailing in its day are recorded there, it tells us, with a good measure of historic certainty. (4) It asks us to discard, as illegitimate, all idea that the inspiration and revelation constantly claimed by the Bible for itself throughout, does really mark it off as eminently different from any other body of literature. (5) Since the Old Testament was treated by the early Christians as unimpeachable history, its impeachment of that history poisons and devitalizes the whole body of the New Testament teaching for us, thus sapping the foundations of Christianity. (6) It insists upon our acceptance of the Christ-dishonoring doctrine of the *Kenosis*, vitally maiming our Lord's unique and perfect personality, making Him, as far as His knowledge is concerned, nothing more than the product of His time. The modified view may be taken that He accommodated

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Himself to His time. But this would then mean giving consent by silence to ignorance, superstition, deception, speaking no word to dispel such clouds and mists so that the truth might shine out clearly, though He knew all the time that the Old Testament records He used and preached from were mythical in character and authorship. In that case the critics have outdone Him in kindness to their deluded fellowmen; they have exceeded the Lord Himself in honesty and in fearless presentation of facts which He kept hidden under the cloak of His gracious accomodation to His times, and so permitted the world to remain under delusion concerning them for over eighteen hundred years!

This question of the effects upon our own faith which the acceptance of this view of the Bible would entail is of such supreme importance that it will be well to state them over again somewhat differently.

1. Since its acceptance would revolutionize the whole order and meaning of Biblical history, such radical consequences may well raise a presumption against it in the mind of the reverent student and cause him to hesitate and seriously question its truthfulness.

2. Its acceptance would affect disastrously in a far-

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reaching way the authenticity of the Bible, which would thus cease to be authoritative, or to be what is claimed for it by its writers; or to be considered in many cases in accordance with facts, or to be true to its professed origin and authorship.

3. Facing the question of its acceptance produces in us a feeling that we are dealing with a deceptive set of documents, originally imposed upon the people for a "pious" purpose, in the same class with those devices which priest-craft in every nation and of every age has foisted upon mankind. In other words, its compilers seem to be portrayed as too much like religious zealots who did not scruple to use guile, prevarication, partiality, in the promotion of their one central idea, namely, a determined purpose to exalt an insignificant tribal god whose origin is as obscure as that of any other god of the ancient world into lordship over the whole earth. He is made to become in the end an all-pervading personality. Why choose him any more than a hundred others? Why should a god and a people who were by comparison such insignificant factors in the ancient world succeed in climbing to a place of such universal and abiding importance?

4. Its acceptance, carried to its logical end, would

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degrade the Book (for it must stand or fall as a unit, every part of it being skillfully interlocked in testimony, theme, and narrative) to the level of the religious mythological literature of pagan peoples. We would have to believe that whole speeches, codes of law, and various narratives are put by its writers into the mouths of their great hero Moses and their tribal god, either Elohim or Yahweh by name, which they knew were never uttered by them.

5. Its acceptance would constitute a peremptory demand upon us for the rejection of inspiration and revelation as set forth in what is now called the old or traditional views. If Criticism is correct, these cannot longer be entertained.

6. At the same time, its acceptance demands acquiescence in what defies logical explanation, acquiescence in a mystery which taxes human reason more than does any acquiescence in the supernatural and miraculous. It asks us to believe that those who countenanced and helped forward the "pious" fraud described above on the people of the Old Testament, and thereby confessed to an utter lack of common honesty, to say the least, were nevertheless possessed of high enough spiritual culture to evolve those lofty moral sentiments and express those sublime

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spiritual truths, which, it is admitted, are characteristic of so much of the Bible, making it decidedly superior to any other body of literature, no matter when or by whom humanly produced.

7. Its acceptance requires us to believe that the critics possess unparalleled literary keenness and an acumen, which, indeed, must be accounted stupendous. In fact, could anything short of the supernatural account for their mysterious, uncanny skill in dismantling documents? In recent times writers have collaborated, and yet critical inspection of their joint work, aided by close acquaintance with the authors themselves, has failed to assign to each his part in the composite production with anything like accuracy.

But the Critics of Scripture go at their task with neither doubts nor qualms. They even split up the text of a document into such minute fractions that a single word is sometimes assigned to another source than that of the rest of the verse. Resort must be had to that which their highly developed historical sense requires them to discard—the supernatural and miraculous—as wellnigh the only adequate explanation of this extraordinary ability (?) to analyze, dissect, sift, and piece together the different

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documents imbedded in so complex a mass of literature as the Old Testament must be, according to their views. It is really too much to ask of anyone not already committed to it as a corollary of their peculiar view of the Bible.

8. Its acceptance renders the Old Testament of very doubtful spiritual worth and meaning. Indeed, it seems hardly reasonable to expect the Old Testament on this view to retain much of this element—little more, perhaps, than the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, or the writings of Herodotus, in fact, the Hexateuch is represented as bearing a similar relation to the life of the Hebrews as do those productions to the life of the Greeks.¹

9. Its acceptance would discredit the New Testament view of the Old Testament Scriptures, and force us to admit that it makes the New Testament way of using them appear foolish and childish. The sayings of Christ Himself would be no exception.

¹ Such allusions are of frequent occurrence in critical comments. On the subject of the course of history in the book of Joshua, it is remarked: "An instructive pallel to Joshua is found in the Greek legends of the Dorian invasion of the Peloponnesus (*Return of the Heracleidæ*), partition of the land by lot, etc." *Enc. Biblica*, vol. ii, 2608.

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10. It so completely disintegrates the books of Bible history that the attempt to re-arrange them in accordance with the critical scheme, or perhaps it should rather be said to take the multiplicity of documents of which they are made up, as now detected and separated apart by Criticism, and throw them into some new arrangement, can result only in a meaningless, disconnected, spiritually impoverished collection. About all that could be done is to spread them out as is done with an ancient "find" of clay tablets or papyri, dug up in Babylonia or Egypt. The historical, chronological view of the critics completely breaks up all unity of structure and theme, making anything like a synthesis from the results of their work quite impossible. Thus is revealed the barrenness that would follow the acceptance of their labors, which throws the Bible student back upon the so-called traditional view as the only reasonable and consistent arrangement.

11. The question of accepting this new view of the Bible forces upon us this direct issue: Shall we side with the critics in opposition to the testimony given in the New Testament by the Apostles, and even by the Lord Jesus Himself? Were they so circumscribed by the ignorance of the age in which they lived that they did not know the

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Scriptures of their people as well as the critics do? Was Jesus? To accept Modern Criticism and its legitimate results means thus that both Old and New Testaments are turned into nothing more than any other book, and possess an authority in no way above that of the literature of any other religion. Even admitting that it evidences a degree higher development now when compared with the religious literature of other peoples, in view of what the critics say may we not expect something in the future of a still higher order? In fact it is surmised that we will have a new Bible after a while. This Bible which we now have, is to be accorded only provisional acceptance.

12. Its acceptance requires us to countenance an absurdity. According to the critics, the main reliable early history of the Hebrew nation—the Judges-Kings series of books—presents nothing like conformity to such a system of history, law and ceremony as is laid down in the Pentateuch, but records much which is contrary to it. On the ground of this silence, we are asked to conclude that the Pentateuch did not exist during all that period covered by the Judges-Kings series of books; that at best only fragments of it were then to be found in brief, stray documents, and these were only gathered together

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into two main documents in perhaps the ninth century B. C.

It is admitted that there probably existed some simple code of law and ceremony, such as was suitable for the ordering of the social and religious life of a nomadic people, like Israel at that time, and that this afterward was incorporated in the Pentateuch. But the first considerable real body of written law is said to have been brought forth and authoritatively accepted in Josiah's day and imposed upon the nation in connection with a startling revolution.

It is taken for granted, in the re-ordering of the history according to the critics, that the nation knew nothing of the existence of this law and its requirements until Hilkiah and Shaphan produced their "find"; but it was accepted *immediately* by king, court, and elders of the nation as the revealed law of Jehovah. This "find" is now supposed to constitute the major part of Deuteronomy.

Can this extraordinary adoption and installation of a national Constitution be explained except as a miracle? If it were represented to be an *old* document, recognized when thus restored, and therefore submitted to as of

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known ancient genuineness and authority, all would have been plain and simple. But that this *new* book, written only a short time before Josiah and hidden in the temple, should be accorded *immediate* acceptance, and produce such nationwide results, is impossible of reasonable human explanation either from history or from analogy. Indeed, it must remain insoluble, apart from the presence of a supernatural and miraculous element. But this, of course, the critics rule out.

After careful consideration, therefore, the historical sense must reject this fundamental proposition of the critics. If we identify this "find" as nothing less than the restoration of the lost Pentateuch written by Moses—and the contrary cannot be proved—then their position is untenable. The very title used in describing this book would lead one to think that the Pentateuch was meant. The objection sometimes raised that it could not be read at one sitting is not valid, for how long Shaphan took to read it is not stated. Days must have elapsed before its examination was complete, either when first presented to the king, or later when made known to the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.

Some general observations. If the supernatural and mi-

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raculous are for the moment eliminated from consideration, and the personages, circumstances, local color and mundane events of the Bible record are examined carefully, sufficient evidence from external sources will be found to prove the correctness of these records. Archeological discoveries have provided this outside evidence. It is rather striking to note that in the standard reference works of the Modern Critical School, whose influence has become so widespread, these results of exploration are not set forth in any connected form or treated in their relation to the Bible record. They would really prove too much to be comfortable for their theories.

The foundation of the whole critical structure is contained in the general proposition that God reveals Himself only through the medium of human history which is evolutionary in character. Therefore, only as we can lay bare the reliable history of Israel, for example, can we learn the steps of His self-disclosure. That means He must work from behind and through idolatry, using the low thoughts and symbols which appeal to primitive people, and the slow development of these to a higher plane, as the instruments or means of imparting knowledge concerning Himself—His character, will, ways and pur-

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poses. Israel, we are told, began on a pagan plane, and their god Yahweh (Jehovah) was nothing more at that time than an idol-god like those of other ancient peoples. With his worship they combined, especially when in Canaan, the Baal-worship; which must mean that the true God then used this forbidding combination to further the revelation of Himself!

God thus identified Himself with idolatry. How could He do otherwise? For supernatural or miraculous disclosures of Himself, He does not, perhaps cannot, give; certainly He should not, according to the critics, for to do so would constitute a violent infringement of the sovereign historical sense. He is restricted in the nature of the case according to the critics, to the use of the creature's own ideas and customs as a means of revelation of Himself.

Now, see in what kind of pantheon He thus takes His place! Idolatry prevailed in Israel as in all the Gentile nations. To this the only certain historical records which criticism allows us to use, bear witness. Paul tells us that the things sacrificed to idols were sacrificed to demons (I Cor. x. 20, 21; Acts, xvii. 22; ² see also Deut. xxxii. 17;

² In the first passage here *demons* should be read for devils, as given by the American Revision, the R. V. margin, and other new

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Ps. cvi. 35-37). In other words, idolatry rested back on a strange and awful power of spiritual wickedness. Moral depravity prevailed in connection with it, and no system of spiritual ethics can be found associated with these conditions; all was sensual. But the true God, driven to it, to obtain a means of revealing Himself, takes His place in such a pantheon of demon influence, in order finally to work out for men a righteous and holy conception of Himself. He chose to identify Himself with the idol-god Yahweh.³ This is the logical issue of Criticism's view of the Old Testament.

If it be asked: Was not this result achieved rather by the lofty and spiritual ministry of the great prophets? we answer: Admitted. But do not these prophets without qualification or distinction ascribe all that they thus translations. In the passage from Acts neither A. V., R. V., nor the American Revision gives the full and literal force of Paul's expression. Rotherham gives, "unusually reverent of the demons;" Darby, "given up to demon worship;" Vincent says that what Paul means to say is, *You are more divinity-fearing than the rest of the Greeks*, but taking his own remarks on this statement and his further comments on I Cor. x. 20 and especially those on Mark i. 34, it would appear more correct to say *demon-fearing*. (See, *Word Studies in the New Testament*.) In the passages from Deuteronomy and Psalms it also should be demons instead of devils.

³ See pp. 22-31.

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reveal to the tribal idol-god with which Israel's history began, according to Criticism, without, however, the slightest intimation that Yahweh (Jehovah) was such an idol-god?

Nor does the New Testament alter the conception and relation thus established. *There is only one God held before our view throughout.* According to Criticism, His record begins as an idol-god of an insignificant nomadic people, back of which, if this is true, there was a demon, according to Paul, and from this has evolved the one true God—"the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Back of all this unpromisingness, we are to suppose that His shadowy figure ever stood, gradually emerging until revealed concretely in the man Jesus.

This account of God's history is a fit correlative to that of man's evolution from the anthropoid apes. These theories lock arms; they are fit companions.

CHAPTER IV

REFUTATION OF MODERNISM

These matters concerning the understanding of the Bible may be considered in the light of jurisprudence, and subjected to the universally acknowledged laws of evidence.¹

The case may be stated as follows: Is the Old Testament a true narrative of fact or a creation of falsehood? The decision must be the latter if the views of Criticism are correct. Documentary or written evidence is to supply the testimony by which judgment must be reached. Let our examination be conducted in accordance with the rules and principles which govern courts of justice.

The charge is that the literary prophets and the schools of Deuteronomistic and priestly writers compiled the Hexateuch, much of it their own creation, which they

¹ In this chapter the line of argument employed by Prof. Simon Greenleaf, LL.D. ("a writer of the highest authority on legal subjects") in his valuable work *The Testimony of the Evangelists*, is adapted to the problem under discussion here. Though used relative to another matter by him, it was one, however, very closely connected in nature and evidence with our present subject.

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combined with ancient myth and legend. Their labors are supposed to have extended over at least three or four centuries.

The question is, Did they practice this piece of deception upon their nation, or did the prophets and men like Ezra and Nehemiah simply revive, freshly emphasize, and apply a body of legislation which had served from the beginning as the foundation and constitution of the Hebrew people?

The issue turns upon the character of these men, their competency, truthfulness in presenting what came under their observation, and the degree of accuracy with which they record passing events. If their credibility in these respects can be established, the greatest possible sum of probability will exist that they did not practice such deception as that in which the critical views involve them, and therefore, the Pentateuch existed from the beginning in the form in which we now possess it, and was in fact a possession of Israel from the time of their invasion of Canaan.

Now, the credibility of these witnesses is capable of ready moral demonstration, if we will put the nature and character of their testimony to the test, bearing in mind

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the essential marks of difference between true and false witnesses.

These writers record transactions with such detail as to persons, places, customs and circumstances that these narratives must be considered unimpeachable evidence that they possessed ability to discern and comprehend what was before them; evidence that their opportunities to observe were of the best, that a high degree of accuracy marks their records, and that their integrity in relating them cannot be questioned. The sum of evidence is competent, therefore, by reason of number and variety; it is cumulative in character, and conclusive by virtue of the unity of result, found coupled with manifest diversity.

Here, then, this rule of law may be applied:

The credit due to the testimony of witnesses depends upon the following conditions: first, their honesty; second, their ability; third, their number and the consistency of their testimony; fourth, the conformity of their testimony with experience; and fifth, the coincidence of their testimony with collateral circumstances.

First, as to their honesty. Here they are entitled to the benefit of the principle derived from the general course of

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human experience, that men ordinarily speak the truth, when they have no prevailing motive or inducement to the contrary. That no such motive or inducement existed with these witnesses is manifest, for their testimony was decidedly adverse to their best worldly interests. Because of it they suffered greatly and labored under constant disadvantages, for it is evident that there was an influential school of so-called prophets in Court circles which resisted them and used the powers of government to persecute them; while the people also generally scorned these men and despised their message.

These circumstances furnished them with every possible motive to review carefully and make very sure of the grounds of their faith and the evidence for the great facts and truths which they asserted. These motives were pressed upon their attention by sad and painful experience. It was not morally possible for them to be deceived. If, in company with those writers and redactors whose literary work it is considered these prophets inspired, they were actually employing deception in producing such literature as the *Hexateuch*, then surely there was present in their circumstances every conceivable motive for abandoning this course of falsehood and ceasing their fraudulent work.

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Plainly they were men of our ordinary constitution and of our common nature. They were swayed by the same motives, animated by the same hopes, affected by the same joys, subdued by the same sorrows, agitated by the same fears and subject to the same passions, temptations and infirmities as ourselves. Their writings show them to have been men of vigorous understanding. There is no motive to be found for the fabrications which Critical views make them responsible for having produced.

Again, we cannot read their writings without feeling that they were good men, of tender conscience, acting under the influence of an abiding sense of God's presence. They abhorred falsehood. Yet if the Critical views are correct, they were producing works characterized by imposture, and known by them so to be.

From the absurdity in which these views involve the whole matter there is only one escape. It is to acknowledge that these writers were testifying in regard to an already completed work, carefully considered and accepted as the truth. If they compiled or wrote books in which they testified that Moses made speeches, performed acts, enacted laws, most of which were their own creation, they

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certainly were sensible of the falsity and imposture of the procedure. But all the evidence goes to prove that they were not knaves, but *honest* men.

Their *ability* is plainly established by their extant work. They were not only good men, but also men of sound mind, and quite evidently of at least average and ordinary intelligence.

As to their *number and consistency*. The Prophets, the Psalm writers, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the others provide a great assemblage of witnesses. In their writings they give the required "concurrent testimony," even though they were not contemporaries. There is consistency throughout, and its force is not lessened in a merely legal sense, even though the claim is granted that discrepancies exist in the recording of the same events.

On the next point, *conformity of testimony with experience*, that would, of course, at once be denied them, since they deal in the main with the supernatural and miraculous. Where inspiration and revelation are claimed, testimony proceeding from such a source cannot expect to be considered in conformity with experience. The writers must either be deceivers or deceived in this matter, for criticism does not allow such things; since they are con-

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trary to human experiences, they are, therefore, incredible. So say the radical critics.

But if we are permitted to infer from what we see and know, that there is a Supreme Being by whom this world was created, we may with equal reason certainly believe Him capable of works which *we* have never yet known Him to perform. It is not irrational to believe that such a God, for purposes of revelation, would depart from His ordinary course of action and thereby give necessary attestations of Himself. Nor can it be shown that the testimony in question is not in conformity with what might be expected as a result of such supernatural experiences. That these experiences were real is at least suggested by the vital difference and evident superiority of their religious testimony over that of all others of a religious nature outside the Bible.

Finally, the coincidence of their testimony with collateral facts and circumstances otherwise known cannot be successfully denied. Variety and minuteness of detail are usually regarded as certain tests of sincerity, for a false witness will not willingly detail circumstances in which his testimony will be open to contradiction, nor multiply them where there is danger of his being detected

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by comparison with other accounts, equally circumstantial. He will deal, rather, in general statements and make broad assertions, and will endeavor to employ or invent such names or particular circumstances as best promise to be out of the reach of all opposing proof. This is *not* the way of the Biblical writers.

In the testimony of true witnesses there is a visible and striking naturalness of manner and an unaffected readiness and copiousness in details of circumstances, without regard to the ease or difficulty of verification or detection. This *is* the manner of the Biblical writers.

Under this head there is also the growing witness of archeological discovery, to provide the needed coincidence of testimony with collateral and contemporaneous facts and circumstances. The abundant and minute references to manners, customs, and many other matters of time and environment which mark all the Scriptures, afford plenty of opportunities to apply the archeological test to the truthfulness of the whole record. There is no formality about them, preface and explanation as though introduced by design; on the contrary, there is a striking naturalness, rarely, if ever, present in creations of fiction.

Such features are also to be noted as the absence of all

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parade of the writers' integrity, any anxiety to be believed, or to impress others with a good opinion of themselves, or effort to excite wonder or astonishment at the greatness of the events they record. Complete is the evident assumption that well-known events are being recorded which are undoubtedly to be believed, like any other matters of public history.

These considerations, in accord with laws of evidence universally accepted and acted upon, certainly constitute a connected argument for the acceptance of the Old Testament, and, in fact, of the entire Bible, as authentic, reliable and honest in its claims and statements. The evidence goes to prove that no such imposture as the plan of the critics involves was really practiced; in short, that the Old Testament abounds in that kind of evidence which makes the probability of its genuineness and truthfulness so strong that, after examination according to legal requirements, *it must be considered sufficient to satisfy the most cautious, and enforce the assent of the most reluctant and unbelieving, unless they are unwilling to be convinced by such evidence as governs in all the common affairs of men.*

In the testimony of these witnesses there is a total absence of the kind of particulars which generate suspicion.

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Hence, another rule of law applies to them, namely, that in such absence every witness is presumed to be credible until the contrary is shown; the burden of impeaching his credibility rests on the objector. The critics, by reason of their charges, carry this burden.

Another rule is: A proposition of fact is proved when its truth is established by competent and satisfactory evidence. The proposition of fact that these witnesses were honest, had ability, manifested truthfulness and accuracy is established by the competent and satisfactory evidence produced in the foregoing argument, so that the presumption must be considered established that they did not practice the imposture with which the critical views charge them.

Hence, we may safely conclude that the greatest possible sum of probability exists that the order of the Bible history and the authorship of its books are exactly what we find them affirmed to be as we read through from Genesis to Revelation.

There is really only one line of argument presented by the Critics against these conclusions. It is drawn chiefly from the silence of the record in the historical books—Judges through Kings—silence as to the order of things

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given in the Pentateuch, buttressed by the fact that prevailing conditions were manifestly contrary to that whole body of legislation and ceremony.

Now if these books of history had been written as part of the design, and with the purpose in view, which Criticism claims, that of supporting and emphasizing the Deuteronomic conception *first* promulgated as national law in Josiah's reign, it is not reasonable to conceive of this history being written without its compilers' making quite constant reference, more or less full in detail, to the fact that all the conditions described were contrary to that central and all-important conception which these Deuteronomistic writers were imposing upon the Hebrew people, commencing with the reform movement of Josiah's day. Only in this way could it be made contributory to their general plan. This is not the case, the Critics being witness. But if both as to order of production and also of history these books *follow after* the Pentateuch and Joshua, there is consistency and unity in the whole series. There is none if we are to conceive that the major part of Deuteronomy, found in Hilkiah's book, comes first, the Judges-Kings series later, and not until a century or two later still the completed Pentateuch as now in our hands.

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The explanations given by the critics of these historical books is not demonstrative of their claims as to the origin and making of the Bible, for it is more reasonable to consider this history to be a record of decline from original establishments and constitution than of evolution out of pagan conditions. This will receive further consideration in Chapter VI.

CHAPTER V

THE MODERN USE OF THE BIBLE

We are now to consider a use of the Bible¹ based upon the modern approach to it already examined. This approach, as we have seen, is made along sociological lines, and the Bible's religious development thus studied is supposed to present an evolution from ideas and conditions of a pagan, nomadic, tribal, and provincial order to the exalted morality and world-perspective of the writing prophets. With them, we are told, the social-redemptive program became one of universal application, so that Jehovah who at the first was only the tribal god of an insignificant and nomadic people became the God of the whole earth, the one true and only living God. This revelatory movement reached its consummation in the New Testament in which we have God made known as

¹ This is set forth by Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick in his recent book *The Modern Use of the Bible* (Macmillan, Sept., 1924). It is examined in this section. The references given in footnotes refer to this work.

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“the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Here seemingly the evolution stopped, and nearly two thousand years have brought nothing new to us. No further advance has been made during all this period, and yet this religious evolution of the Bible, quite unique in the world’s history, did not cover much more than one thousand years according to critical estimates. It is admitted by them to be superior to all other religious movements whether of previous, contemporary, or subsequent development.

Further, the Bible manner of treating those things which are common to all such movements is beyond question unequalled. The Bible gives us the highest form of religious development known to man. It contains a richness of content unsurpassed by any other body of literature. It makes known what is of ever abiding significance to the moral and spiritual welfare of the human race. The Bible in its splendid isolation is one of the strongest arguments against the widely accepted evolutionary hypothesis of world development. It smashes through, and leaves a wide open breach in the line of supposed uniformitarianism in either the physical or spiritual history of the world and maintains its commanding position against all attacks.

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The Bible, however, so it is said, is a hard and difficult book for the modern man to understand; hence the great effort to make a use of it which will appeal to his highly developed scientific and historic sense.² The difficulty arises from the fact that those Biblical ideals and experiences which are admitted to possess intrinsic merit and abiding importance are presented in categories of the time in which the writers lived. For example, the New Testament is written in the category of the first century world-view, much of which the "well-instructed man of today" considers it impossible to accept.³ Consequently the modern demand is for a rephrasing in categories

² This is made in seeming forgetfulness that man's first great need is to see himself as God sees him, sinful, helpless, and hopeless, a moral and spiritual ruin, needing a spiritual regeneration, as much as the chaotic earth needed just such a preparatory physical work before it could be inhabited by man. The natural man does not understand the things of God (I Cor. ii.), nor by worldly wisdom can he know God (I Cor. i). He must be "born again," receiving spiritual life through faith in God's word, and the acceptance of Christ as God's appointed Saviour, whose atoning death alone redeems and saves eternally (Rom. chs. i-iii; John iii; Titus ii. 11-14; iii. 3-8; I Peter i; Heb. x).

³ Such as miracles, demons, angels, fiat creation, apocalyptic hopes, eternal hell, bodily resurrection; and in the Old Testament "gross anthropolomorphisms," "belated ethics," "Semitic cosmology," etc. (*e. g.* pp. 5, 89).

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suited to the present world-view of those ever abiding and reproducible experiences of vital religion which are found in the Bible. Just what this involves we shall see later.

If we take the road of approach to the Bible which Modern Criticism has built, the chronological arrangement of the strata which make up our Bible ⁴ forms one of the most important guides to Biblical study and inter-

⁴ The best that can be said is that this chronological arrangement is approximate (p. 6), and that the result is only "in its outlines well assured" p. 7. We have examined them and these outlines seem very uncertain; they in fact appear too much like the quivering line drawn by the seismograph. They leave a man in a chaotic state of mind regarding the Bible. "The reader, of course, must never take the actual order of documents in our Bible as indicative of the chronological order in which they were originally produced. The first chapter of Genesis, for example, is very late" (p. 12, footnote). Some day we will probably get the Bible published in its chronological order, and then we may expect to find parts of Genesis in about the middle, Judges perhaps at the beginning, the Psalms scattered along at different points, though most of them are considered very late, and Daniel would come near the end of the Old Testament. Nevertheless, we are assured that this approximately chronological order, despite "endless minor uncertainties," has an importance which "from the standpoint of practical results is difficult to exaggerate" (p. 7). From this grab bag of approximate results and confessed difficulties a spirit of wisdom is obtained in some way by which "we can trace the great ideas of Scripture in their development from their simple and elementary forms, when they first appear in the earliest writings until they come to their full maturity in the latest books" (p. 7).

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pretation. By pursuing this road the student, it is supposed, will learn how to trace the growth of faiths and ideas regarding, for example, God, man, duty, sin, worship, from primitive and childlike origins as found in the Old Testament up to the highly developed ethical teaching of the New.⁵ Even so, "the nub of difficulty" remains that so much of all this material is expressed in categories now outgrown by the world. Throughout the Bible, its writers think and speak in the terms of the outworn Semite cosmology, whereas today the universe must be studied in the light that modern science has shed upon it. This makes it necessary to think in the category of evolution as to the whole order of creation, earthly and heavenly. Then there are the categories of demonology, angelology, miracles, apocalyptic hopes, the latter two entailing in some degree divine invasion of world-affairs, a catastrophic class of ideas quite unacceptable to modern minds which dwell in the realm of evolution. These things are considered as vital hindrances to the modern man's use of the Bible. Of course, raising the question as to whether *he* is right in rejecting such categories is practically ruled out of order. His present vantage ground of advancement

⁵ Pp. 8, 11.

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is accepted as being sufficiently patent to put the matter of his being right beyond question.

The conclusion of the whole matter then is this: since this Book is (1) the one Christians must continue to use as a sufficient guide in all moral, spiritual, and religious relations because it records the most wonderful religious development of all time, admitting by common consent, to contain all that is essential to the moral and spiritual growth of mankind, and yet (2) it must be considered "an old Book in a new world,"⁶ because its language, style of ideas, and in fact the entire framework in which its teaching is set, have all become outgrown by the world, the necessity for its abiding use (3) raises the problem of making its study and interpretation consist chiefly in the process of extracting from it those ideas, ideals and spiritual experiences which are judged to be abiding and reproducible, leaving behind that mass of outgrown categories to which we have referred and to which, we are told, no well-instructed man of today could possibly subscribe. What is thus extracted must then be rephrased;⁷ in this,

⁶ P. 36.

⁷ We are told we must "decode the abiding meanings of Scripture from outgrown phraseology" (p. 122). Paul was mistaken when he thought we had God-breathed Scriptures (writings); probably what

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it is confessed, "the most difficult task of all remains: building up constructive statements of what we positively do believe in new formulas endowed with the same persuasiveness and penetrating power which the older mental categories once possessed."⁸ For this nothing could suffice or avail short of inspiration such as the Bible writers assert for themselves. This claim has not been advanced since the close of the first century by any one worthy of serious consideration. Even Modernists hitherto have prudently refrained from any such pretense. Yet that alone could accomplish the above task, for the admissions are made "that the Spirit of God was behind that process and in it," of which the Bible is the result, and "that God was speaking."⁹

he meant was that we had God-breathed ideas or ideals clothed in the very imperfect and temporary dress of man-made conceptions, for the "decoding demanded by the facts which we are now considering is . . . not between transient customs, but between elemental forms of conception, a manifest divergence between our habitual presuppositions of thought and those used in Scripture" (p. 123). From this it would seem that Scripture *can* be broken, although the Lord Jesus said "*cannot*" (John x., 35); little would it seem to matter about its "jot or tittle" of which He spoke (Matt. v. 18); and what are we to think of such wholesale rejection of Scripture's phraseology, if "men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. i. 21, R. V.)

⁸ P. 189.

⁹ Pp. 30, 95.

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Let us consider what it means to use the Bible in the manner thus proposed. There is hardly need for further remark as to the Old Testament since the modern view and use of it have been considered in earlier parts of this book. As to the New Testament, plainly its writers believed in demons, angels, miracles, bodily resurrection, and apocalyptic hopes. We are told they used these "mental frameworks and categories of explanation" because they knew of no other way to express what was real and vital to them in the matter of religious experience. Likewise when it became a question of interpreting the person and work of Jesus, they could do no better than make use of current and accepted categories, such as that of "Messiah," with its framework of apocalyptic ideas, and "Logos," with its framework of Hellenistic philosophy.¹⁰ But all of these categories are declared to be inadequate for the present day.

Our author holds that the light of modern knowledge has dissipated the ignorance in which demonology flourished. As to angels, nothing is known of them today—who ever saw one? Miracles simply do not happen, certainly not of the kind so often found in Scripture. The

¹⁰ Pp. 216, 217.

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modern man comes to Scripture and says, "These are mental frameworks and categories which I cannot use; they mean nothing to me since they are not verified by my experience," and he is tempted to go further and say, "This book is of no use to me." That such a conclusion would result in irreparable loss to him, we are assured from nearly every quarter. This then raises the problem of how to find what is useful today in the Bible. We are told that the reader must be brought to see that there are abiding meanings and reproducible experiences wrapped up in the outgrown phraseology of Scripture, and that deep within its settings of thought and speech there are experiences and convictions for which the book essentially stands, spiritual truths which are in themselves permanently valid, timeless and unchanging messages. The deeps of the Book call to the deeps of the human heart.¹¹

But how, then, shall we explain what those categories which the modern man discards because of his superior intelligence meant to those who could and did use them?

What is meant by the category of demonology as Scripture presents it? It is nothing more nor less than "a transient phrasing of abiding experiences . . . nothing

¹¹ Pp. 61, 95.

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that the devils ever stood for has yet gone out of human life. Personal temptation; various aspects, allurements, and results of sin; disease, . . . human suffering and death—all this is with us still." "Everything the devil and his hosts ever meant is with us yet."¹² It is not, then, the fact that the devil and demons actually exist, are separate spiritual beings, as the Bible writers seemed to think. It is rather that there always have been and still are certain very real experiences which to these writers were most intelligibly explained by the use of the current demonology. That category seemed to them the most available explanation of these particular abiding experiences. We are asked to keep the truth of the experiences, but utterly reject any idea of the reality of such agency as that of the devil and his hosts.

What about angels? Angelology, too, is only a phrasing of experiences, real enough in themselves, in another category of those ancient times since outgrown. "Angels represent our fathers' profound and practical consciousness of the reality, friendliness, and availability of the spiritual world," whether that be in strengthening the spirit in temptation, opening prison doors, giving peace

¹² Pp. 121, 122.

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and power in time of stress, or appearing in other ways to accomplish God's ministry to man.¹³ It is not, then, that they *saw* angels (and *we* have no personal knowledge of their actual existence, or non-existence, for that matter), but the angel-idea was found suited by them for use as a vehicle to express their spiritual experiences.

The modern man may be quite humble and "refuse to claim omniscience by denying" that such beings as angels exist. Evidently, that does not prevent him, however, from virtually denying that the Biblical writers meant what they said when they describe angelic visitation, ministry, and communication as being commerce with actual spiritual beings. Did the Lord mean that the Father would send Him twelve legions of "spiritual experiences," and what can He mean when He speaks of joy in the presence of the angels over a repentant sinner? (Matt. xxvi. 53; Luke xv. 10.)

What about miracles? Again, they are simply the outworn "phrasing" of real enough experience. We must seek "to discover what, if any, was the vital experience that our forefathers were trying to express by their category of miracle."¹⁴ This, we are told, was simply the

¹³ Pp. 124-126.

¹⁴ P. 156.

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"saying that superhuman power is here, available for use, and that when men are open to its inrush and control, it is not easy to set limits to the results that may ensue. Granting all the associated aberrations and credulities of the miracle-idea, it was nevertheless our forefathers' way of saying that they believed in the living God, whose ways of working are not bound within the narrow limits of man's little knowledge. . . . The crucial question for modern Christianity to face is not first the credibility of this or that narrative nearly two thousand years old, but the possibility of retaining in our modern scientific thought such a vital and vivid expectancy of divine action as our fathers often phrased in terms of miracles." ¹⁵

Little wonder that Dr. Fosdick must say that, "approaching the Bible so, there are some narratives of miracles there which I do not believe. . . . Certainly, I find some of the miracle-narratives of Scripture historically incredible. Others puzzle me . . . and about many an ancient miracle-narrative a man may well suspend judgment, awaiting light." ¹⁶ The miracle-narratives

¹⁵ P. 158.

¹⁶ Pp. 163, 164. Among those regarded as "incredible" the following are named: the sun standing still, which "may be poetry;" the story of Jonah and the fish, which "may be parable;" the miraculous

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which he "cannot help believing" are those which describe "experience in terms of miracle so that we recognize that the same kind of experience is open to us, or would be open, if we were receptive of God's incoming power." Such narratives are "fundamentally credible and useful."

This class of miracles consists for him of the guidance God gives as much now as ever to men and nations, of divine calls and commissions received today as much as ever, of spiritual endowments, answered prayers, and transformed lives from which the power of God is transmitted to others—"all through the Scripture such activity in divine power is presented in terms of miracle." Examples are found in Israel's release from Egypt, God speaking to Samuel, Paul's conversion, the Church's enduement with power, as on the day of Pentecost. These aspects of the plagues in Egypt and the fall of Jericho's walls, which "may be legendary heightenings of historical events;" "the amazing tales of Elijah and Elisha [which] may be largely folk-lore;" and, in the New Testament, finding a coin in a fish's mouth, or walking on water, or blasting a tree,—these "may be just such stories as always have been associated with an era of outstanding personalities and creative spiritual power." The puzzling ones mentioned are the miraculous draft of fishes which might be one of "many symbolic literary devices in an Oriental Book," and "the physical aspects of the resurrection of Christ," such as his eating fish, passing through closed doors and offering to let Thomas touch his hands and feet.

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are in fact experiences being reduplicated today, only in describing them we do not robe them "with the marvelous drapery which ages when miracles were part and parcel of men's common thought habitually employed in their imagination of events, but, for all that, the abiding experience involved in them is clear, and it is as true and as possible for our day as for theirs." ¹⁷

After all, they are not miracles in the way we use that term, but simply ordinary experiences which have been draped by the Oriental mind in terms of the marvelous and figurative, which it would never occur to anyone to use today in telling about them. Are not the miracles of Scripture by this treatment either looked upon as incredible, or frittered away?

The reasoning is of the same order in regard to the second coming of Jesus—His return in bodily form. The New Testament writers felt fully assured of the complete and final world triumph of the Master. Their experience with Him made them conscious that that conquest must be accomplished in the end by such a "towering personality." They knew no better way of expressing this confidence in Him than by using the current category of apocalypticism,

¹⁷ P. 165.

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and they boldly taught that Jesus would return in person to accomplish His final victory, coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Of all the books of the New Testament, the Fourth Gospel alone is said to "spiritualize the event," and the reason given is that its writer was trying to reach Hellenistic readers to whom the dramatics, catastrophic features, and physical resurrections of the Jewish apocalyptists, were very distasteful. But it is admitted that just the latter view prevails elsewhere in the New Testament. "The book of Revelation is built upon it. When Paul lets his imagination dwell on God's coming victory, he draws the familiar picture with which his Jewish training had acquainted him long before he had known Jesus: the sudden, physical coming of the Messiah upon the clouds, the ascension of the living saints to meet him in the air, the resurrection of the righteous dead, the day of judgment, and the final destinies."¹⁸

What is the kernel that can alone be considered of abiding value in these apocalyptic thought-forms which are entirely repugnant to the modern man? Simply *the hope* which lies embedded in them, the hope of "the victory of righteousness upon this earth in the coming king-

¹⁸ Pp. 104-110.

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dom of God, whereon Christ, looking, shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied." This is to be achieved through human instruments like *ourselves*, of "such a spirit that God can work his victory in and through us; to persuade others to be transformed by the renewing of their minds; to strive for the better organization of society that the divine purpose may be furthered, not hindered, by our economic and political life; and then to await the event in his way and time." The modern preacher takes up the hope, but drops as useless the ancient category, in which it is expressed in the New Testament, and says, "I do not believe in the physical return of Jesus."¹⁹

The same disposition may be made of the miracle of the Lord's Resurrection. Why not consider it, also, to be the phrasing in a category in common use in the first century of the disciples' intense feeling—in fact overwhelming conviction—that their Master must live on, that life and death such as His must be of ever abiding significance? The most natural way they knew of how to pass this experience on to posterity was to express it in the category of bodily resurrection. Not that this actual resurrection took place, but that the Jesus they knew, was so singularly

¹⁹ P. 104.

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great that the result of His presence in this world even for such a brief span must be an ever abiding influence of tremendous consequence to mankind. Thus He was once dead, but now alive again forevermore, He ever liveth! But, I suppose, that "alive again forevermore" must be in the experience of those men who "rediscover" Him by working through Scripture's outworn phraseology.

This principle of reducing everything to the status of subjective experience in men will dissipate all personality apart from man himself, if consistently applied. Devils, demons, and angels are gone. Why not God too, so that the creature, man, may be left in full possession of the field with his ever abiding and reproducible experiences? Why may we not say that the category of God, as presented in the Bible, simply constitutes the way in which its writers at different stages of development expressed spiritual experiences which were found higher, more noble, and satisfying to their yearnings than any others known by them? If we are to consider Scripture teaching concerning demons, angels, and miracles, for example, as simply the phrasing used to explain certain experiences, which phraseology the world has outgrown, it does certainly seem that there is no reason why we should not

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understand the same to be true of its teaching as to God, both in the Old and New Testaments. Why should we suppose their personal God exists any more than their personal devil, and such beings as demons or angels? Would we not be able, then, to go on and say that "nothing that God ever stood for has gone out of human life" for "everything that God ever meant is with us yet,"—love, purity, holiness, sacrifice, kindness, hope, righteousness? All is reduced to a matter of ethics.

The logical conclusion seems inevitable that *experience*, and nothing but experience, according to one aspect and another of its character, is either God or the devil, angels or demons, and also, I suppose, either the heaven or hell of Scripture.

Guided by this principle, how shall Jesus be interpreted? As far as we know He committed nothing to writing. Let us simply consider what we may extract from the Gospels as a record of His teaching. We thus get a vivid conception of both His experience and character. It is of superlative worth, for "He is the best we know, and we will not interpret God in terms less than that."²⁰ No one ever spake such words of spirit and life

²⁰ P. 188.

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as He did. But does this mean anything more than that He had the deepest, broadest, and highest of all abiding and reproducible experiences which a man could have, and that He phrased them for us in the most exalted form of the category of God ever known, so that in His teaching we have the climax to that God-idea which had its dim beginning in Israel's wilderness history? Am I to consider all this as anything more than simply the phrasing of His experience which is now reproducible in all who rediscover Him beneath the outgrown Messiah and Logos categories of the New Testament?

Such are some of the results derived from the application of this principle of interpretation by which the Bible is to be made modernly useful. It is really a weapon of destruction, striking down sacred things, and leaving us alone—off by ourselves with the idea of *experience* for company which we are to suppose the Bible writers have explained by the use of such terms as God, devil, demons, angels, and miracle-working. It reduces to this same level the New Testament teaching concerning the Deity of Jesus, His atoning sacrifice, the Virgin Birth, and His sinless humanity.

The Gospels speak of Jesus being tempted by the devil.

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But this must have been the phrasing of His experience in the current category of demonology. We are not to think of an external, personal, and known enemy, for the devil and his hosts, we are told, simply stood for experiences still common to man—temptation, sin, suffering. How does this work out in relation to the Lord? Experience is made up of feelings and effects resulting from a combination of inward state and outward circumstances. The outward circumstance in our Lord's case was the wilderness, its barrenness, isolation, and privation. What was the inward state in His case? Bearing in mind the modern view of the devil, it could only have been an awful strife against evil desires to manifest power to satisfy self-need, to act presumptuously to gain a place of national recognition, and to sacrifice the consciousness of right to evil for the purpose of securing world-power.²¹ Plainly this means that *in Him was sin*, even as in you and me. This must have been the devil that tempted Him! To just such blasphemous conclusions does this principle of interpretation lead. Yet, as reported, He spoke of Satan as a distinct personality having a kingdom, and on one occasion

²¹ In this I refer to the three forms of temptation recorded in the Gospels.

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of coming to Him, but having nothing in Him. This, however, we must explain away as simply the "phrasing" of experience in a current "category." The Gospels tell us the angels ministered unto Him. This again was simply a phrasing of His experience. Such use of the Bible forces us to the awful conclusion that the Lord Jesus possessed a nature which manufactured the poison of temptation, and seemingly also could produce the elixir of comfort—an instance of sweet and bitter waters from the same fount.

This principle of interpretation tends to the annihilation of all personality outside of man himself. Human experiences have been personified in Scripture by the use of categories which now appear outgrown. As we have been told that the devil and his hosts stand for certain abiding experiences of human life, and the angels too, why not follow this lead, and consider the category of God as given in Scripture to be simply the phrasing of the highest spiritual experiences of the human spirit in that class of ideas which seem revelatory of a supreme Being, distinct and personal, immanent within man yet having a transcendency which leads him to strive after better things. Why not consider God and his hosts the category in which

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goodness and its blessings in varying degrees have been interpreted by the Biblical writers just as the devil and his hosts was the category in which wickedness and the misery incident to it has been explained? Thus, too, in their ignorance of scientific thought they used the idea of place as to final destinies and spoke of heaven and hell; but these can only be ultimate states of experience to which men make either ascent or descent according to whether good (God) or evil (the devil) gains ascendancy. A principle which may lead to such conclusions when consistently applied to all parts of Scripture must be utterly false and extremely dangerous to use. It is a stepping-stone to infidelity. Its consistent application leads us into difficulties far greater than those it is supposed to dispel for "the well-instructed man" of today.

Many, however, who advocate this principle would recoil from such conclusions, and stoutly proclaim faith in a God, living and real, whom they consider has wrought for self-disclosure through the Biblical process.²² Taking

²² Dr. Fosdick says: "What has actually happened is the production of a Book which from lowly beginnings to great conclusions records the development of truth about God and his will, beyond all comparison the richest in spiritual issue that the world has known. Personally, I believe that the Spirit of God was behind that process

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them at their word, what happens to Scripture when this principle of theirs is applied to it?

It is no longer a question of God having acted to give by direct personal intervention, and through the use of divinely commissioned instruments a written revelation—complete, final, and perfect—any more than He, by a special creative act brought man upon the scene. It is all a matter of evolving experience through which He has struggled to get Himself disclosed to men. At first He had to accomodate Himself to very much that was primitive, childlike, even pagan, so that the revelation appears today clothed in many outgrown categories, even in the New Testament, with the result that men must now struggle back through them to find God in the Person who stands highest on the ladder of experience—Jesus.

We are not to think anything final has taken the form of a written revelation. What alone abides is the realm of man's basic experiences, which are constantly being set forth in changing categories. Of all such attempts the and in it. I do not believe that man ever found God when God was not seeking to be found. The underside of the process is man's discovery; the upperside is God's revelation" [p. 30]. "He who long can ponder the fact and not perceive that God was speaking there does not earnestly believe in God at all" [p. 95].

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Bible is the best and highest in spiritual content. On this basis, the modern preacher's task is said to be that of decoding abiding meanings from its outgrown phraseology. But there is no prospect that finality will be reached, for though "we retreat from old categories into the experiences behind them," and "enshrine those experiences in positive formulations even though that means building up a new orthodoxy," our own phrasings will "in time be dissolved by a new liberalism."²³

If the principle that we are now discussing be sound is it not incredible that this Book should remain unequaled by any other literary work produced during all the centuries, notwithstanding its so-called outgrown mental framework and categories? Why is it abidingly superior, without a peer? If out of the first century came such a collection of potent writings as those of the New Testament,²⁴ how is it that the same "experience" process has produced no set of books during the succeeding centuries, especially the last two in which men have made such wonderful strides in knowledge and wisdom, which even in a small way approach the New Testament, or are

²³ P. 190.

²⁴ And it everywhere accredits the Old Testament as God's word.

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destined to like results in the world? If inspiration of God is the only permissible alternative explanation, and it is one which the New Testament plainly predicates concerning the whole Bible, then inspiration is a revelatory process which has ceased. It is evident that nothing has been produced in all the years since, with even a shadow of right to be considered on an equality with the New Testament. God, then, having inspired these men to write for all time, did He permit them to use categories which less than twenty centuries have rendered unreal, untruthful, or which must be considered without meaning today? Is it not more reasonable to presume that He directed the expression of truth throughout to be clothed in "timeless and universal terms"? That the foreshadowing of good things may precede the good things themselves, and on their arrival that we should leave the shadow and cleave to the substance, is quite true. This finds exemplification in many ways upon a comparative study of the New Testament and the Old. But that is something clearly different from what we have been considering—a complete rejection of "the cosmology, demonology, angelology, apocalyptic, and miracle-idea," which are woven into every part of the Biblical fabric.

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We are assured that "wide areas of Scripture deal with abiding experiences set in timeless and universal terms. The elemental needs of man's spirit for peace, stability, comfort, and divine saviorhood; the meaning of temptation, sin, remorse, penitence, pardon, and reconciliation with God; the basic virtues of honesty, sincerity, courage, charity, magnanimity, love; the great hopes of a kingdom of righteousness here on earth and of life hereafter—these are the fundamental matters in Scripture."²⁵ But the very outgrown categories, of which we have been speaking, so contaminate all these things too, that they must stand or fall with the rest as far as being considered trustworthy and authoritative is concerned. The fact is that the foundations in general are destroyed by the Fosdick method.

Let us look a little further. Because demonology outside of Scripture presents many crude and exaggerated features, we cannot justly make this a reason for rejecting demonology as presented in Scripture. Nor is the lack of modern scientific knowledge or experience concerning such beings sufficient reason for denying their existence. Any open-minded study of demonology, as described in

²⁵ P. 170.

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the Bible, shows that it radically differs from all the popular conceptions of demonology which prevailed in the time of the writers of the Bible. Why this marked difference? If we allow inspiration to enter as a factor in the way claimed for it in Scripture, who can say its writers did not have knowledge imparted to them by it denied to others not so inspired? This simple principle applies to and accounts for all those categories which appear so objectionable to the modern man. He needs to humble himself to the fact that what he is using is God's word, something immeasurably beyond contemporary thought, knowledge, or experience.

It is not different as to angelology. Both Old and New Testaments are free from "the absurdly puerile teachings of Rabbinism." In fact, the truth about demons and angels must finally be sought in the words of our Lord. This settlement of the question will be satisfactory to most Christians. The modern standpoint is distinctly Sadducean as to both demonology and angelology.

There is little wonder that the interpretation of Scripture presents great difficulties to the modern man who insists upon raising many of them and solving all according to contemporaneous thought. It is quite true that

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he is living in a world greatly changed from that of the times in which the Bible was written, and it may greatly help that we can once more visualize through various avenues of knowledge the world-conditions amid which its writers lived and wrote. This provides us explanations of many things peculiar to Oriental life and its circumstances. But in the choice of ways of approaching the Bible, neither a barren literalism, nor fanciful and often absolutely absurd allegorism can be considered safe and sound. And the modern approach, which may be called historic and scientific, also fails since it presumes to reject what is not a matter of present knowledge and experience, knowledge and experience which another decade may entirely revise. Yet we are asked to take it as our *summa summarum*, and make contemporary thought the boundary wall beyond which we dare not pass, though it be recognized as partial in most things and defective in not a few.

Not one of these three methods, taken by itself, is a sufficient guide in the work of interpreting Scripture. Each of them contains something good, and such elements in combination may greatly help us in making a sound, reverent exegesis. One general principle, however, must

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bind these elements together for our use. It is this: *Scripture must be its own interpreter*. It is sufficient unto itself. This we might expect if it is what we claim it to be—God-breathed.

There are allegories in Scripture which we must study and interpret. But that is quite different from adopting the allegorical interpretation for the great mass of Scripture, as occurs, for example, in the work of Philo and Origen. There are types, symbols, parables scattered thickly throughout the Book, but we are not by any means left to our own imagination to interpret them. We have examples of their use and interpretation within Scripture. These ought to help us. "Wide areas of Scripture" are so largely filled with basic and essential truths, interwoven with its types, symbols, parables, and allegories, that there is always abundant material at hand by which to check and restrain all that is fanciful and contrary to sound, sober exegesis. The great need today is that *all* Scripture be taken into the reckoning.

Not allegorical, but rather analogical interpretation is the basic principle to govern our procedure. Not analogy worked out according to our own unregulated thoughts, but analogy operating through careful and patient com-

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parison of text, context, and the general teaching of Scripture. Analogy specifically means a similarity of *relations*. "A prince is analogically styled a pilot, being to the state as a pilot is to a vessel."²⁶ Things which are analogous bear some resemblance or proportion to each other, they correspond in some particular or particulars while differing in others. Analogy, therefore, strictly denotes only a partial similarity, as in some special circumstances or effects predicable of two or more things in other respects essentially different: thus when we say that learning *enlightens* the mind, we recognize an analogy between learning and light, the former being in the mind what the latter is to the eye, enabling it to discover things before hidden. Once this analogy between learning and light has been accepted as sound in principle we may proceed, for the sake of further illustration and instruction concerning it, to compare light and learning in certain other respects to determine whether the analogy holds in a variety of relations.

By the use of this analogical process, kept within the bonds of Scripture itself, we may study its every part, and find that perfect fitness links together in abiding

²⁶ Quoted from Berkeley.

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interrelation and interdependence all the parts of its complex structure. For example, the Levitical order of sacrifice bore a very important relation to Israel's place as Jehovah's people, while its laws were also a manifestation of his character and government. Analogous to this in the New Testament is the teaching concerning the sacrifice of Christ and its relation to the manifestation of God, its bearing upon the relation of man to God, and in particular upon the relation to God of those accepted on the principle of faith according to the value of the atonement. Between these things there is analogy, similarity of relations, although by comparison very much that is different. But the fact that this analogy has been established for us by Scripture itself lays a secure basis upon which to proceed to determine in what other respects the analogy holds just as in the case of light and learning suggested above. Thus the features of resemblance between the Levitical and Christian systems may be studied and discovery made of what is typical in the Levitical of the Christian which is indeed the perfection of things, the substance of which the Levitical is now seen to be the shadow. The comparative study will also enable us to discern what is of an anomalous character, and the

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contrast between them will serve to emphasize the worth of the analogous features.

The analogical use of Scripture serves as a sufficient reply to any reproach brought against it because of its anthropomorphic statements. It must always be borne in mind that the extent of the analogy or resemblance is to be determined within those limits to the application of such statements which Scripture itself furnishes.

Analogy established by the careful comparison of Scripture with Scripture opens the way into the spiritual meaning of the written Word. It is a process which will effectually protect its user from the extravagant and fantastic interpretations characteristic of the allegorical school represented, for example, by Clement and Origen.

Many a difficulty in the Bible can be solved only by a careful consideration side by side of various circumstances and conditions pertaining to that difficulty and these related conditions may be scattered over a wide area of Scripture. But once assembled and seen in their interrelation they will be found to constitute an adequate explanation of that difficulty for any one except a prisoner within the walls of contemporary thought. Because such difficulties are not dissolved by a wave of the hand,

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many seem to think they are divinely commissioned to turn their backs on the problem they are supposed to study, and so destroy for themselves, at least, the possibility of finding its solution. Such rashness is a sad indication that the fundamental message of the Book has not been apprehended. It bears consistent testimony to man's spiritual destitution and sinfulness, his need of new birth, the acceptance by faith of the eternal Saviorhood of our Lord. As the one Mediator between God and men who accomplished atonement on the Cross, He is the only and all-sufficient Savior in whom men must believe to be saved, and acknowledge Him to be both Lord and God. Otherwise, remaining what Scripture calls "natural men" (1 Cor. ii. 14), they cannot know the things of God. To such men it is small wonder that the Book's points of essential difference with modern thought, by which standard so much of it is judged to be outgrown, are a stumbling-block to their worldly wisdom. Except a man become as a little child, the Book must remain enigmatical to him, so that seeing he may not see straight, and, hearing, as he supposes, yet not be hearing according to God.

The modern use of the Bible which we have been con-

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sidering builds upon the most insecure of foundations—the modern critical approach to the Book; makes use of a principle thoroughly destructive in its tendencies; and inevitably produces results highly inimical to man's spiritual welfare.²⁷

²⁷ Although Dr. Fosdick emphatically rejects the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, and considers it absolutely unusable today, there could hardly be anything more allegorical in character than the way he proposes to find in the Bible abiding experiences in changing categories. Allegorism is arbitrarily treating what is obviously historical as spiritual or figurative. Demons, angels and miracles, as presented in the Bible, are historical, real existences and events of actual occurrence. His prestidigitateur method causes them to vanish, and their places are taken by figments of the writers' brains, which are nothing more than figures of, or a symbolic way of giving expressions to, various spiritual experiences which ever abide and are constantly reproducible. According to Dr. Fosdick's method devil, demons, angels and miracles have no existence outside of their existence and function in this outgrown apparatus of explanation. The Biblical writers evidently believed that devil, demons, angels actually existed, and that miracles were historical events; but modern men think they know better, and therefore must consider such things only to be taken in an allegorical sense.

CHAPTER VI

SOME PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

Observations already made have indicated the view of the Bible which is here advocated. We may now define more fully what it involves.

The revolutionary views of Criticism, which alter so completely previous ideas of Bible history and also the former understanding of its origin and development, are contrary to the principles of Divine government and at variance with the course which the evidence shows God pursued in the revelation of Himself, as stated again and again and confirmed in the Bible.

This weakness of Criticism, too, finds sufficient analogous confirmation in a survey of history in general, due to the fact that God is ever working behind the scenes in a providential way. His *revelatory* way is found only in the Bible, and in primary connection with one family and nation, but that supplies us with a key nevertheless, shown to be of universal significance.

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Revelation, as Trench says, is God "drawing back the veil or curtain which conceals Him from men; not man finding out God, but God discovering Himself to man." Providence is God behind the curtain, in full control of all through His omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence.

The general fact that God is at work in man's history working out His own eternal purposes goes without question. He participates in its course, and may be found present in some form at its every crisis, even though we may discern His presence only in a very shadowy way through our very limited vision and imperfect understanding of the issues which are involved. These may be earthly and heavenly, natural and supernatural, seen and unseen, human and superhuman. But in the Bible this presence culminates in particular and special relations, which become of universal import by showing that God must through all history be there working, though at the best only dimly seen by us, except where His written and inspired book of revelation comes to our aid.

When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the children of men, He set

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the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel (Deut. xxxii. 8).

The God that made the world ¹ and all things therein, He, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is He served by men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things, and He has made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring (Acts xvii. 24-28; Am. Rev.).

Daniel says:

The Most High ruleth over the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He wills." And Nebuchadnezzar, in the day of his conversion and restoration, declares in language which echoes the testimony of all

¹ *Kosmos*, "originally *order*, and hence *the order of the world; the ordered universe*. So in classical Greek. . . . The word is used here in the classical sense of the visible creation, which would appeal to the Athenians" (Vincent).

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inspired witnesses, "I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored Him that liveth forever; for His dominion is an everlasting dominion and His kingdom from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou? (Daniel iv. 25, 34, 35; Am. Rev.)

God, then, must be working in and through all history to the consummation of eternal purposes. He is weaving together strands of many varied hues which seem to us broken and disconnected, as they stretch across the centuries. They may look all tangled and confused, when with one quick short life-glance we try to survey the expanse over which they are spread; but the eye of the Divine Worker sees the end from the beginning—"His eyes observe the nations" (Ps. lxvi.7)—the finished design is before Him, every strand has its use, and all is being woven together into a perfect fabric, like a tapestry of rare color and beauty. When it is finished and spread out in the court of the Eternal, it shall bring to Him universal praise and worship.

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Read the marvelous panoramas of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, as with divinely illuminated vision they portray the Divine action, both in retrospect and in prospect expanding in various forms until it embraces "all the kingdoms of the world which are upon the face of the earth." Then, no other conclusion than the one just stated is acceptable to the reverent student of Scripture.

This tapestry of universal history, to continue to use our figure, into which is being woven the abiding illustrations of God's providential ways in the whole world and its changeful course, is not yet finished. Thus far only unfinished scenes and figures are open to view. We cannot now describe in detail the final and complete story of His providential ways, any more than Moses could have made known the wonderful mystery unfolded by Paul in his epistles.

But, if the figure is permissible, the tapestry of Divine Revelation which was only beginning to be made in Moses' day, is quite unlike that of human history in this respect: *it is now finished*. We can therefore consider the wonder of its full design, and get an understanding of the mind and truth of God as worked out in it in a rounded

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whole. With this as a key, we can even look out upon the world-course, upon mankind, and already be persuaded that in the complexity of human affairs God must be working, must have been working through all the ages. The Book of revelation takes us behind the curtain to make known to us the great principles which rule everywhere in the ways of God.

In Scripture these principles are acted out for us as in a great drama. Israel occupies a central place upon the stage which we may call the land of Canaan, and there on a reduced scale, but with full and perfect detail, the action takes place by which the revelation is made and the most far-reaching understanding given of the character, will, ways, purpose and glory of the eternal God. The whole description and interpretation of this Divine panorama is found in the Holy Scriptures recorded by divinely inspired penmen.

We turn and then return, to the Bible, confident that light will always be found there by which to penetrate into every avenue of human interest and research, and guidance for mind and heart as exploration proceeds.

Those principles and the course which God pursues in the process of His revelation of Himself with which the

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views of Modern Criticism come into conflict or of which they constitute a denial may now be outlined.

The fact that God uses history in general has been stated. The Bible, however, is the proof of His special use of it for particular, specially chosen objects within well defined limits of action and within a definite cycle of relations. Thus, we may say God's use of history in the Bible bears a relation to His use of history in general. This concentrated form of procedure is introduced, it would seem, in order that all the features of the revelation of Himself thus more vividly manifested in this smaller compass may be perceived more clearly by the onlooking universe, heavenly and earthly, in all their variety of part and measure. In this way, attention is focused from every quarter upon one circumscribed scene in which every action and character plays a recognizable part, and where, too, stands the mystery of the ages—the Cross of Christ.

We must now endeavor to point out the regulative principles which govern, and indicate the steps which constitute, the course adopted by the Master as the process of the whole marvelous revelation.

1. All history presents a constantly recurring threefold cycle which is especially illustrated in Bible history, thus:

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(a) introduced and established perfection; (b) degradation, the result of departures from this originally perfect order, issuing finally in some disaster or catastrophe, invasion from without combining with internal conditions to produce break-up and change more or less radical; (c) revival or restoration in which there is a return to original and fundamental principles. Restoration, however, is not to the originally perfect state, for the marks of the preceding degradation remain evident in some degree and exercise a salutary influence consistent with God's government. Often some higher and richer unfolding of truth grows out of them by which we learn that God, in furthering His purpose of revelation, may make use of untoward circumstances to manifest Himself. The initial perfection is of God; the degradation is of man who proves false to his responsibility to maintain what God has established, and connected with the disaster which follows upon man's failure is God's intervention in judgment. Restoration or revival follows in which a return to original and fundamental principles is accompanied by God's intervention in salvation.

This constantly recurring threefold cycle determines the grand divisions of Scripture history, and is found

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in operation also in the general course of the history of all nations and peoples. In the light of Scripture, we may account for its universality by the fact that a single final issue is being worked out under the hand of God.

Illustrative stages in this threefold cycle may be traced in these epochs: from Adam to the Flood period; Noah to Abraham's call; Abraham to the Egyptian period; Israel's history from the first passover to the Jordan; from Joshua to the Judges period; from the commencement of the Davidic kingdom to the captivities; from the return to Christ; from Pentecost to the present.

Again, consider creation. First, perfection (Gen. ii. 1); then, ruin (vs. 2) in respect to the earth and its immediate heavenly relations; then the work of restoration as accomplished in the six days. Take the case of man: created perfect and placed amid perfect conditions (Gen. ii); degradation and disaster enter in by reason of failure to maintain the established perfection (Gen. iii), man is driven out of Eden; restoration effected afterward through the provision which God Himself makes. But Paradise is not restored. That man is to continue to live his life amid the consequences of his failure is the edict of God's government and, so living, learn the richness of His mercy

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and goodness under those very conditions, in a way not otherwise possible.

Thus, too, with Israel. In the first period, a perfect code of law and ceremony with the knowledge of the one true God, is followed by a second in which the nation lapsed into gross idolatry and utterly failed to observe the covenant originally established. God brought in judgment after judgment, revival after revival, the judgments reaching a climax in the great captivities and the work of revival in the great return from Babylon. Each revival was characterized by some measure of return to the original order, and this is especially noticeable in the Ezra-Nehemiah period.

God thus acted to restore at the same time not erasing all marks of His judgment. Nevertheless, the threefold cycle was resumed; degradation followed, culminating in the crucifixion of Christ, the consequent destruction of Jerusalem and world-wide dispersion of the Jewish people. From this debacle, restoration will again be effected, as prophecy reveals; the kingdom glory will follow. Even that, however, closes later in failure with an ensuing judgment which seals up the record of time (Rev. xx).

The history of the Church tells the same story. Set

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up in perfection by the Apostles, departure and degradation began to manifest themselves before the end of the first Christian century. Conditions grew darker until the midnight hour was reached in the Middle Ages. Then revival came with the great reformation, and a fresh start was made. The record since again has been one of successive decline and revival, with a growing inability for sustained effort as the years have passed and an apparent decline of scope or area to which the results of revival attain. The New Testament bears witness that this would be the general condition of things in its writings of latest date.

Not only, however, is this threefold recurring cycle manifest in such great movements as those of Israel and the Church; it may also be observed in the life histories of individuals given in the Bible. It is further manifest in the history of human society, although here its rise and fall can not be deciphered as plainly as in those which are even more directly of God. Such human movements take their rise in, and are governed by their relation to the sinful condition of humanity. Since they start from its level, we first witness a climb more or less slow from certain existing primitive states to those of higher and

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more advanced character. No sooner is the pinnacle reached than corrupting influences begin to manifest themselves; decay sets in; next some disaster or catastrophe happens. Out of the chaos which follows, some measure of revival afterwards takes place only to end up by tracing a similar treadmill on the historical chart.

This philosophy of history, explained and illustrated in the Bible, so as to bring it within our grasp and thereafter observable, also, in human society, is catastrophic in character and not evolutionistic except in so far as each occurring catastrophe proves to be a summons to some movement of recovery or leads to the introduction of some element of higher character than had previously existed.

These sequences become so increasingly evident as history proceeds that they almost point to the operation of a universal law. They seem to indicate the steps of the Eternal across the ages of time. This threefold constantly recurring cycle is most distinctly defined in the Bible, doubtless because it is concerned with God's revelation of Himself as the one true God. The explanation of Bible history is plainer than that of mere human history, for His personal manifestations and direct communications

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are there, and elsewhere only what may be termed the tracks of His providence.

2. From a study of the operation of this law, if the term is permissible, emerges another governing principle of the divine ways in revelation. It becomes apparent that God times His acts of self-revealing according to existing need, and in every case His action awaits that fullness of time which is according to His perfect wisdom. Thus each part of His revelation can only be rightly understood in a moral relation to the circumstances existing at the time He gave it.

Let us fix our attention upon His revelatory activities consequent upon man's fall, as that timed the opportunity and necessity for what the Bible reveals.

Three main features may then be noted. (a) His judgments, never being arbitrary nor merely punitive, express the moral and spiritual relations of conditions existing. (b) His will is so made known that those who will, may hear and obey even in the midst of those conditions, and go on to enjoy spiritual fellowship with Him and become in their human measure morally representative of Him. (c) All is so presented that, in meeting whatever might be the special need on any given occasion,

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instruction, edification and application suitable to the need of all ages are imparted. Thus does His Word make God known as omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent in relation to the whole course of history, no matter what the variety of circumstance, or the particular period of time we may consider.

This is what the apostle Paul has in mind when he affirms that, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. xv. 4). Again, after recounting part of Israel's history, he says, "Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come" (1 Cor. x. 11).

With this same Apostle again we too may then be sure that, "Every scripture is inspired of God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). This, "word of the Lord abideth forever" (Peter) and the Lord Jesus let us know that "Scripture cannot be broken."

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The synchronism stage by stage of revelation and history is evident from a study of Scripture. When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son (Gal. iv. 4). "For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all; the testimony to be born [or, rendered] in its own times" (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6). He came at the end or consummation of the ages to put away sin by His sacrifice (Heb. x. 26).

These ages had their definite turning points in which the development of revelation synchronized with the existing conditions. The time of innocence was closed by man's disobedience. This called for great changes, and God reveals Himself to pronounce judgment on all concerned, to be sure, but also to make known other beneficent purposes which He set forth both by word and action (Gen. iii, iv).

The race now begins life amid the adverse conditions resulting from the Fall. There is advancement in material things, but degradation in moral and spiritual things. In due season God acts. He speaks in warning prophecy by Enoch, as Jude informs us, and takes this man miraculously unto Himself out of the world; when in special com-

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munications with Noah, God announces His judgment upon it and acquaints him with His plan for his salvation. Noah preached righteousness during the appointed season. Here elements of advance crop out in God's revelation, and still further development takes place when He recognizes Noah as the new head of the race after judgment has purged the earth.

Failure and degradation again ensue and in its course this time idolatry is introduced. Its spread and prevalence become the occasion for fresh action from God, and forth from its midst He calls the man Abram to be a special witness. With him and his seed God sets in motion a new and distinct upward course of action which proceeds and is developed during the rest of time, side by side with the downward trend of world-conditions under the leadership of evil spiritual powers which had invaded it in the age after the flood and foisted idolatry upon the race of men.

This does not mean that God had the control of affairs taken away from Him in so far as it pleases Him to exercise it. The contrary has already been affirmed. It is, however, in providential ways that this control is to be understood as operative. His ways in revelation from the time of the call of Abram are closely connected with

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Abraham and his seed. In those ways progress and enlargement are still to be discerned, as the Bible record is studied. One of the stages is timed to connect with the fullness of Amorite iniquity (Gen. xv. 16). A ripeness of time was reached in the course of history for Israel's deliverance from servitude with its related richness of revelation and warning visitation of judgment upon the gods of Egypt, and a little later upon the awful iniquity of the Amorites laid bare in the ethical laws given by Moses.

While maintaining testimony as to what is His due within their apprehension, so that men are without excuse, God permits evil fully to manifest itself before judgment falls. Thus will His action when examined, be justified in the eyes of all, His judgments vindicated. But there goes hand in hand with every such manifestation of what is called by the Prophet "His strange work" a further revelation of Himself. His manifestation of judgment upon idolatry waited from Abram's call to abandon it and witness against it in his obedience to God's word until in the time due for it His judgment blazed forth in the land of Egypt, the mightiest kingdom of that day, that the effect might be felt throughout the

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world. A little later His judgment burned to extermination in the land of Canaan, the scene of Amorite iniquity, which was, also, the highway for all nations, so that the divine message might be carried to all parts of the habitable earth.

There at the cross-roads of the world, God set up His arena for all future revelatory action, for none could miss learning whatever He might there perform. The action thereafter rolls on to its grand consummation in Christ and the complete revelation of God and His purposes by the Apostles and prophets of the New Testament.

3. As this record of God's revelation is studied, another principle becomes evident. It is that God takes up certain samples by the use of which He gives the manifestation He desires. The sample He selects may be a nation or it may be an individual. Thus, He used Israel to teach us lessons of universal and eternal significance. Thus, too, He used Abraham, Joseph, Pharaoh, David, Nebuchadnezzar. And even though this earth upon which we live be only "a floating speck in a cosmos that staggers the greatest intellect," yet God selected it as the stage upon which to show His marvelous physical and spiritual creations,

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and as the scene of His Son's life and death to which indeed universal and eternal significance attaches.

Alfred Russel Wallace once said that it appeared to him that this "floating speck" was at the center of the great physical universe. If so, its place is analogous to that in which God set Israel, even at a point where flowed all the cross-currents of the world's life; a place central to all the nations and peoples of the earth. God it would seem chooses the small, the insignificant, the despised, the weak, and makes such shine as stars of the first magnitude. Is it not this in principle that Paul tells us when saying, "God chose the foolish things of the world, that He might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that He might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea and the things that are not, that He might bring to nought the things that are: that no flesh should glory before God"?

4. Israel's history in particular may now be considered. The view Criticism takes of it has already been set before us and we have also examined its bearing upon the origin, making, and character of the Bible. The argument is that the conditions of the Judges can be explained only

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by the non-existence of any such system of things as the Pentateuch sets forth, and by denying that any such conquest as the book of Joshua describes could have taken place, since in either case it would be almost impossible to explain how such great religious degradation and such general condition of servitude could come to prevail in so short a lapse of time.

But if we accept the priority of the Pentateuch and Joshua this is not hard to understand after all. Analogies to it have been manifest in history which cannot be questioned. The Christian Church was established in perfect spiritual order during the twenty-five years after Pentecost. Yet before the end of the first century degradation had already set in, and its spread was plainly foretold by the Apostles. After seventy-five years, at the most, we have John's sorrowful record of the churches in Asia (Rev. ii, iii.) as given to him by the Lord Himself. In a few more years this decline had developed to a point where no one could recognize them as having any close likeness to those of the early and originally perfect Christian order of which especially the Pauline epistles are a record.

Because of this decline and degradation are we to con-

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clude that those epistles were not in existence at the beginning, or that the teachings they present were not the foundation upon which the Church was established through the oral ministry of Apostles and prophets? We would have to do this if we apply to this history the Critical viewpoint as to Israel's defection to which that of the Christian Church so closely corresponds both in character and in length of time. But it has no more application to the latter than to the former. The history in both cases is strikingly parallel. It all shows how quickly man can bring to ruin that which is committed in perfection to his responsibility.

Even though it be shown that the history of the period between Joshua and Ezra records no practical conformity to Pentateuchal legislation, this cannot be regarded as proof that the Pentateuch did not exist. Does the growing darkness of the Christian centuries preceding the great reformation period prove that no Bible was in existence until the days of the reformers? Yet who would have known by looking upon the Church or reading its literature during those dark ages that such a book as the New Testament really existed?

In a multitude of ways the history of the Church could

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be summoned as witnessing that no such Scriptural charter of Christianity could be found. Plenty of traditions, Church decisions, philosophic speculations and mysticism; but the Bible—where was that? Seemingly not known, certainly not taught or used publicly. Therefore non-existent! Was it? No. Then, was the Pentateuch non-existent in the Judges-period?

There is scattering evidence in the historical books to show that the Pentateuch was known during the time from Joshua to Josiah, just as there are isolated cases during the Christian era which show that the Bible was known in certain quarters, at least, during the Dark Ages.

The point is that Israel's history conforms to the general law already observed—perfection, degradation, restoration. Convincing proof to the contrary is not to be found.

5. If the critical view of the Bible history is untenable, then the companion theory of the origin and making of the Bible becomes equally so, and the supposed brilliant achievement of demonstrating the parallelism between Israel's history and the growth of the Bible sinks into insignificance. It becomes valueless.

The question of authorship need not give us a great deal of concern. We can discard the elaborate and com-

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plex documentary apparatus of the Critics. What might be called the reasonable things upon which they found their distinctions are quite susceptible of other explanations, and the many unreasonable ones call for scant notice. The Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch need not be doubted merely because it is evident that another hand wrote the account of the great leader's death and burial. There is no need of denying that certain passages give evidence of an editor's work, for, as the various books passed through the hands of divinely inspired men, such as the prophets, Ezra, and Nehemiah, some such editorial work may well have been done by men qualified by inspiration to do it during the period in which the Old Testament canon was arranged. This, however, in no way weakens the claims to be authoritative accepted and witnessed to within the Bible itself, a most important part of which is the testimony of the Lord and His Apostles.

That documents of record and narrative were used by some of the Biblical writers is evident from many references to such in Kings and Chronicles. A similar reference occurs in 2 Samuel (i. 18), in Joshua (x. 12, 13), and one in the Book of Numbers (xxi. 14, 15). The names of these sources are plainly given, which puts them in a

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very different category from those conjectural documents named by the critics—Elohist, Yahwehist, Deuteronomist, Priestly; then a combination of Elohist and Yahwehist by some redactor; then a joining of this last with the first three; and ultimately a combination of all together, not forgetting, however, to mention that the Priestly document has several parts originating in different ages.

Moreover, none of these documents, Criticism tells us, is to be considered the work of an individual but of schools to which are given the several names mentioned in the foregoing. The method by which these supposed documents unmentioned in the Bible are distinguished is largely one of unsupported assertion. In many instances the evidence is fantastic and inconclusive; much of it is merely ingenious sophistry.²

It is admitted by one of their own number that "in spite of the labors of critics there still remains a considerable number of passages in which division of sources is very uncertain. There is, too, always a certain danger of using as criteria comparatively rare words or phrases [a

² Reference need only be made to standard works of the Critical school such, as the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, and the bibliographies mentioned in them to realize that such is the case.

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very favorite resort of this school], which possibly by accident happen to occur once or twice in one source or the other. The reasonings by which the critical results are obtained are very complicated . . . in many cases the analysis is . . . difficult and uncertain.”³

While critics stand united in the acceptance of the documentary hypothesis, their contradictory conclusions among themselves and the varying results at which they arrive in the effort to distinguish the documents and assign to them the Bible books piecemeal, discredit their position and make them look little short of absurd. This becomes evident if we compare the works of foremost critical writers dealing with the same Bible book.

6. Without doubt the primary object of the Bible is moral and spiritual teaching. But it is evident that the history it records is history teaching by example, and is an integral part of its structure, essential therefore to the revelation given in this Book. This history is history put

³ “Hexateuch,” 371, 372; Hastings’ *Dict. of the Bible*.

A. B. Davidson, himself of the Critical School, says as to its theory, “Its weakness lies in the incapacity which as yet it has shown to deal with many important details, and particularly in the assumption, absolutely necessary to its case, that the ancient historical books have been edited from a Deuteronomistic point of view.”

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to use and made the vehicle by which God is manifested and His purposes disclosed. It is permeated throughout with manifold moral and spiritual instruction.

There is manifest selection of material in the Biblical narratives, a selection suited to the primary object of moral and spiritual teaching, which object is kept constantly in view in every part and by every writer throughout the fourteen centuries which separate the commencement and the completion of the Bible.

This paramount object is the bond which unites all its diversity into a perfect and harmonious revelation of God, His character, ways and purposes. The Bible narratives possess a character distinctly different from those of merely human production. "How often we find absolute silence where man would have enlarged, and how often a *fierce* light is cast on episodes that men would have hidden in darkness."

Now this interweaving of history with doctrine and precept and their complete interdependence make it necessary that the history in order to be fit for this service should be inerrant. If it is not, all else may well be questioned since the historical elements are basic to the moral and spiritual elements which pervade the Book. Thus,

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the dislocation of the historical order which criticism advocates means dislocation everywhere, and the casting into disrepute of the entire volume.

These considerations make it necessary to regard *infal-libility* as an element of the nature of the Bible and a guiding principle in its interpretation. No historical detail may be regarded as having a negligible bearing upon the moral and spiritual purpose of the Book. Though there may be many instances in which the application of this reference has not yet been discovered we cannot presume to say that it will not be, even as many of the once obscure and seemingly unsolvable problems of the Biblical record have received confirmation and elucidation as the different departments of human knowledge and research have expanded.

The term infallibility, as here used, may need a word of definition. As applied to the Bible, it means that the record therein given is in every respect true and without error. Both in historical details, even as found in differing accounts of the same event,⁴ and in the statements of men,

⁴ Though there be contradiction between different accounts as they are given, this furnishes no just ground for discrediting or rejecting either or all of such accounts. Quite often reliable witnesses due to some circumstance not known to either, or to difference in

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good or evil, of Satan, of angels, or of God, we have in every case a divinely accurate report in these "Holy Scriptures," "the Scriptures of truth."

This leads us to another essential element of the nature of the Bible. That is its *inspiration*. Otherwise, it is impossible to conceive that a record of what in some cases did not pass under the observation of the writer and in other cases could not have done so which must be true, for example, of the book of Genesis should be inerrant. But even that which did come under their immediate observation is not simply told as any such matter would ordinarily be when told for its own sake, but is connected with the distinct operation of the Holy Spirit in the mind and heart of the writer, producing an appreciation of it in accord with the Divine Mind, and communicating it in words framed according to these impelling influences of divine origin. Only inspiration can account for predictive prophecy and for the way in which history is treated throughout the Bible. The *fact* of inspiration Scripture

position with respect to what they describe, are found to differ materially in describing the same event or scene. But when such unobserved circumstances or difference in position become part of the evidence, then substantial agreement in their testimony is established and conflicting details reconciled.

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repeatedly affirms; the *method* is nowhere stated. Its *phenomena* must be gathered from the Scriptures themselves.

In those who wrote the Bible, the emotions of the soul, the energies of the spirit and even the infirmities of the body are made use of under the control of the divine Spirit, always, of course, in a manner according to the purpose in view. The individuality, peculiarity, and distinctive qualities of these writers find expression in their work, so that the Book is one of ever living interest from the human side, while from the divine it proves itself in every part to be "the word of God, living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are marked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." ⁵

⁵ Heb. iv. 12, 13. It is worth noting that what is adduced by the Apostle, in this section of the epistle, as an example of the living, active, and judging character of God's Word is the much questioned history of the Pentateuch, and one of the Psalms (xcv) which makes reference to it. Bear in mind, also, that the Holy Spirit is said to speak these words (Ch. iii. 7); also Gen. ii. 2 is referred to as what "He hath said" (Ch. iv. 4).

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This does not prevent our believing that at least some of the writers did use existing documents, consulted state records and studied various sources of information which were at their disposal. There is evidence that they did, but the Holy Spirit, who moved them to speak or write, gave perfect guidance to them here as elsewhere. It can not be denied that He could direct them what to take and what to leave, even when what was at hand to use was a defective record. They would therefore doubtless at times be conscious of a superior power directing and influencing them to express what might appear to be in conflict with existing records or beliefs. This must have been the case with Moses, who though "instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts vii. 22) wrote a cosmogony so entirely different from any other and superior to anything yet produced, that even the savants of the twentieth century are forced to admit its preëminence. The scriptural account of the flood comes out triumphant from a similar comparison.

Inspiration, then, is *divine control* of the human instrument, sufficient to insure inerrancy; it implies *divine selection* of the materials used in the communication given by that instrument, the Holy Spirit exercising His influ-

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ence and guiding every faculty, thereby effecting the exclusion of error and insuring the use of *divine words* in all such communications. With the Holy Spirit present in power, to influence and direct the mind, that mind could not do otherwise than submit and select and use that which though of human origin, is suited to the Holy Spirit's purpose in treating the subject presented. This is not mere dictation—far from it, for all the powers of the mind and heart of the instrument are engaged and wrought upon so that a divine impress is left upon the whole man.

In view of these conditions it is not surprising to find that the prophets afterwards pondered their own communications seeking the full meaning which was not in all cases readily apparent, at first, to them. We are not required to regard them as being always in the exalted state accompanying the work of inspiration. Hence, distinguishing when under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit from when they were not, they would find profit and enlightenment, in the latter case, from the study of their own inspired writings.⁶

7. This leads to the consideration of another element

⁶ I Peter i. 10-12.

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of the Bible consequent upon its inspiration. Its contents constitute a *revelation*.

The term, revelation, may be applied to the Bible in both a general and specific way. Speaking generally, the whole Book is a revelation *from* God in the sense that it has been put together for us according to His perfect will and direction and hence discloses relations and meanings which would not otherwise be known or understood.

But not everything in the Book pertains directly to the revelation *of* God; this, however, is the underlying object in view and everything is made to contribute its quota toward this end. All is absolutely true as occurrence as recorded, but not all is sanctioned truth, for record is made of the words and actions of Satan as well as of other wicked spirits and wicked men;—all this is plainly to be distinguished from the approved revelation of God concerning His personality, character, will, purpose, action, and doctrine, commingled of truth both objective and subjective, which pervades the whole volume.

The distinction thus drawn, however, does not mean that any part of it is without profit, for all has been brought together with reference to the underlying object of conveying a revelation of God in every moral and spiritual rela-

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tion, and with special regard to man. No part, not even a list of names, could be taken from the Book without doing violence to it, and causing loss to us. Nothing must be taken from or added to its perfect unity.

It does not follow, therefore, that all that Scripture records as said or done has of necessity the sanction of God attached to it. There are things permitted and not approved, of which use is made, but which are not to be attributed to His command. But whether commanded, or merely allowed in their occurrence, His perfect wisdom and power is exercised upon them afterward, and everything made to contribute to the revelation of Himself. We judge from the fact that He has given us a Book containing these diverse elements that He intends us to learn lessons from them all, and that all relate in some way to the object in view.

God has so written His Word that constant exercise of heart, mind, and conscience are rewarded with ever additional understanding. Concentrated study is the only method of normal spiritual growth accompanied by keener discernment and enlarging apprehension of God's perfect will and truth. The reverent student of Scripture increasingly feels the need of attaining to a comprehensive

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grasp of *all* the scriptures as he seeks to interpret any given part of Holy Writ. Each part also has its contextual as well as its immediate local or specific relations and no part can ever be perfectly understood except in the light of the whole.

Scripture cannot be considered to any solid, lasting advantage as a mere volume of isolated texts, any of which may be made to mean whatever may please the fancy, and even applied to things entirely foreign to its context. Scripture is a divine unity, each part of which must be considered in the light of the whole. It is the work of one Spirit, one Mind. As in a perfect organism, every joint and band and member stands in relation to the whole. The successful student of Scripture cannot, therefore, avoid much exercise, prayer, and searching of every part of this divine library, even so, his much labor will be in vain unless an abiding sense of human weakness in dependence upon the Holy Spirit run through it all.

The *principle* we need to bear in mind is given to us in 2 Pet. i. 20, for all Scripture is of prophetic character which entwines itself about the Messianic hope, especially the Old Testament. A translator of acknowledged repute renders and comments upon this passage as follows:

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Knowing this first, [that the scope of] no prophecy of Scripture is had from its own particular interpretation,—*idias, epiluseos ou ginetai*, “is not explained by its own meaning,” as a human sentence. It must be understood by and according to the Spirit that uttered it. The “prophecy” is, I take it, the sense of the prophecy, the thing meant by it. Now this is not gathered by a human interpretation of an isolated passage which has its own meaning and its own solution, as if a man uttered it; for it is part of God’s mind, uttered as holy men were moved by the Holy Ghost to utter it. In the “prophecy of Scripture” the apostle has in mind the thing prophesied without losing the idea of the passage. Hence I have ventured to say [the scope of] “no prophecy.” One might almost say “no prophecy explains itself.”

In another place he says:

There cannot be a doubt that from the fall of Adam there was one grand subject of promise and prophecy, of hope and expectation—the Seed of woman who should bruise the serpent’s head—the Seed of Abraham—the Seed of David. To say that this was not produced in the universal mind of Israel, at all times with

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which we are acquainted (and with no nation are we acquainted so long, or so well at this early date), would be to deny the most certain fact, sustained by the most incontrovertible evidence. . . . The testimony of Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius concur, it is well known, as stating that through all the East a notion prevailed, that, at the time Christ arose, He should arise who would possess the empire of the world. In a word, so strong was the testimony and the expectation, that all over the East it had reached the Gentiles, and was well enough known in the West to be recorded by the two Gentile historians of those times. All prophecy must (if God's promise was such and true) have centered here; and so, in fact, it does—sometimes given as a relief and encouragement to oppressed saints—sometimes breaking through the dark cloud of judgment, like the sun in a stormy day; but, from Gen. iii to the last chapter of Malachi, beginning, middle, and ending, every ray of light converged to this point, that Messiah was to come. This is the first enduring sense, the key and object of all prophecy. All the rest is subordinate to, and conduces to this. I have no doubt myself that this leads us to the sense of “private interpretation” in 2 Pet. i. 20. We

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have not God's mind in it unless we take His scope in the whole. No prophecy of scripture is of its own interpretation. It must have its meaning as part of a whole.

In closing a further word must be said as to the manner in which Scripture speaks. The Bible deals with man according to the state and circumstances in which he finds himself in this world. Things are referred to in it in the way they are observed by him in the course of his ordinary everyday life. Generally speaking, physical facts are thus stated, and though sometimes manifestly beyond the contemporary knowledge of the times, yet such statements it must be admitted, have proven wonderfully accurate, even in the light of modern science.

It may be said, then, that the Bible states things as they naturally appear and relate to human experience, and not as they appear in scientific theory or observation. Thus alone could the Book become intelligible and make its appeal to men placed in the midst of these appearances and experiences. This again is the chief reason that it remains unimpaired as revelation, after translation into every language under the sun, of use in every age, country and clime—the universal Book of universal application,

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ever living, immutable and eternal—the revelation of the one true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the ages, the incorruptible, invisible, only God, to whom honor and glory belong to the age of ages.

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